

GOD'S WAY
OUT

CAMPBELL

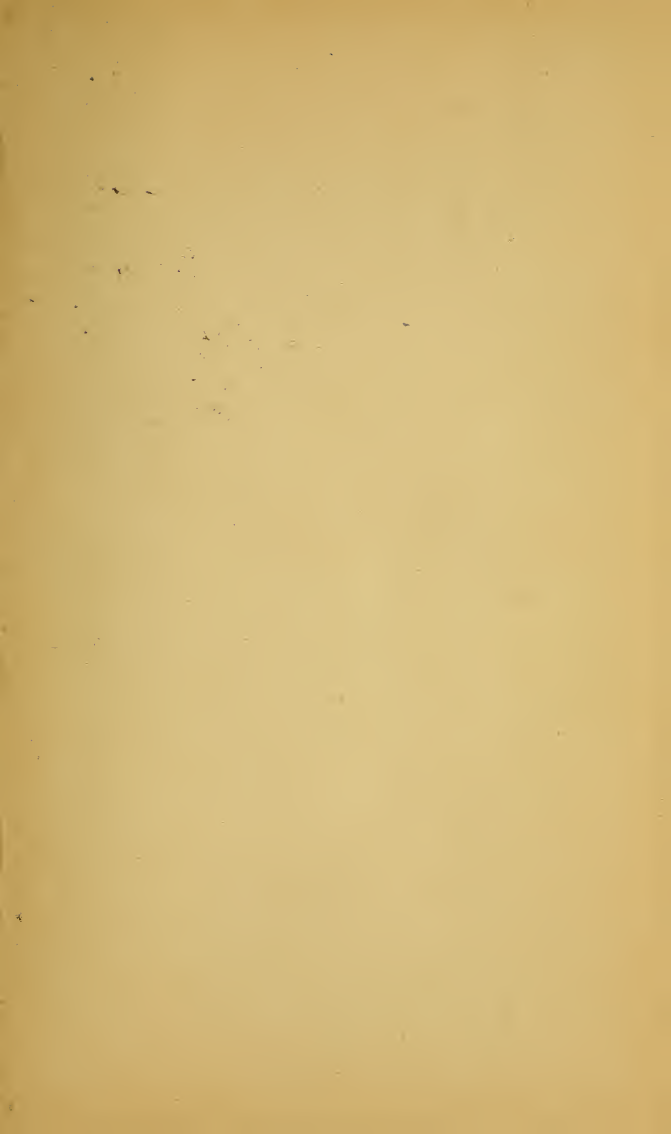


Class PR 4

Book 1

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GOD'S WAY OUT

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THE WINONA PUBLISHING CO.
CHICAGO, ILL. WINONA LAKE, IND.

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Two Copies Received

DEC 30 1903

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Nov. 4th 1903
CLASS 4th XXc. No.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Whether you may be an inquirer for the way of life I know not. But this I know—it is a way of blessedness most precious and profitable. It has God's gracious, fatherly oversight and keeping along the journey here. It issues in the unalloyed, unspeakable and unending joys of His immediate presence hereafter.

I would fain impress this upon you. Allow me therefore, in this opening chapter, to give a few reasons serving to show in some measure its surpassing claim upon your thought and action. If you are already an earnest seeker after the way bear with me a little for the sake of someone who may not be.

The question of bread, in one form or other, has never lost its interest for the human family. Its need and how to obtain it has perforce engaged their attention and effort through all the centuries. This common and unfailing interest attests the importance of this way of the natural life in the thought of mankind.

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Now should there be a similar interest shown always and everywhere in the way of the supernatural or spiritual life, would it not equally attest the importance, both of the way and of all inquiry concerning it? Truly. Now this has been one of the great, outstanding facts of human history. A recognition of the relationship of this life, for good or ill, to the world of the invisible, has characterized the human family amid all the variations of its earthly destiny. The law of God, unwritten or written, has been so present and operative everywhere, that the inevitable sense of alienation wrought thereby has led, just as surely, to efforts having for their object the propitiation of the invisible Power. The question, "How can man be just with God?" has been of perennial and world-wide interest. It may be, as it has been, answered, now in one way and now in another, by different peoples, but the fact of its unfailing presence and its attempted answer by all, is surely a tribute to its importance as one of the great and undying race questions of this mortal life.

Not only so—in making the estimate you must have regard to the sacrifices which men have been willing to make in answer thereto. This it is which reveals the awful gravity of the need and the intensity of the grasp which this question has

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upon the heart and mind of man. It has been recognized as one involving life and death, so that, in answering it, life, in one way or other, has been prominent as a solving element. Life has been realized as forfeited, and, in the hope of making good the loss, life has been offered by way of acknowledgment.

Now this confession and hope finds typical or symbolic expression in the offering of the lower animal life. But this did not always satisfy the human heart, crying out, under the pressure of its deep-seated cravings. Amid the blindness of their sin-darkened nature and the greatness of their need they hesitated not to offer the life of man himself. Human sacrifices attest the greatness and intensity of man's conscious need. They bring home to you, as nothing else merely human can, the surpassing importance of all inquiry as to the way of life—of the question, "How shall a man be just with God?"

And not only in the days of old were children immolated on sacrificial altars for the sin of the soul, but in the modern years have they been given over to death out of deference to this craving of the human spirit.

Then, too, all the infinite variety and degree of self-inflicted penance, found along the line of effort after a condition where the soul may feel

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that the question of its being just with God has been answered satisfyingly—this also joins in unison with the rest proclaiming the transcendent importance of the inquiry.

Neither are you to overlook or forget the fact that this inquiry concerns a life compared to which, in duration, the present dwindles into utter insignificance. Onward, onward, ever and endlessly onward as the duration of God himself, while at the same time filled with the unspeakably glorious elements of a never ceasing and limitless growth,—what a life is this as compared to that of the present transient existence.

How it impressed the minds and hearts of prophet and apostle and with what vivid imagery they gave expression to the fact. "My days are swifter than a post." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." "Behold thou hast made my days as an handbreadth: and mine age is as nothing before thee." "Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" "Thou carriest them away as with a flood: they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up." "We spend our years as a tale that is told." "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" "Mine age is departed, and is re-

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moved from me as a shepherd's tent." "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass." "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

When you consider then the brevity of the life temporal as compared to the life eternal, surely the conviction cannot be avoided that an inquiry concerning it is of the last importance.

This conviction will surely be deepened when, in addition to this contrast as to duration, there is the further fact to be remembered that what that immeasurable future life is to be, must be determined in the present—fleeting as it is. And not only fleeting, even when its full measure is granted, but how much more so when you consider its uncertainty. "The places that now know us shall soon know us no more forever." Here to-day, perhaps in the flood-tide of life. And to-morrow the clods of the valley are over you.

"Like a snow flake on the river,
A moment white, then gone forever."

Surely then the brevity and uncertainty of human life here as compared to that of the fu-

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ture, and its determining influence in relation to the character of that future, gives surpassing interest and importance to an inquiry as to how the life that now is shall issue in a glorious immortality.

But still further, in order to enhance it, you are not to be unmindful of the tremendous individual interests, as to happiness or blessedness, which are involved. They are both personal and relative and in their sweep embrace the here and the hereafter. The natural result of sin when operative is to create and foster strife, and mutual repulsion between all the elements of being. From its baleful presence peace flees. Everything becomes Ishmaelitic, in so far forth as sin holds sway. An inkling of the horrid brood which it genders is given in Gal. Chap. V. Death is in the wake of all its movements. It throws everything out of gear. The chariot wheels of life drive heavily where it enters. And enter everywhere it would, if it could, dethrone God and reduce all being to chaos and night. The blessed harmony of the family life, as between the eternal Father and his human children, it destroyed. It sent them adrift. Instead of being made glad by the Father's presence and seeking it, it filled them with an awful dread and drove them to seek a hiding place from him whose name is LOVE.

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"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" What fellowship hath light with darkness, love with hate, life with death? Is it a light thing to be thus thrown out of harmony with God? To become mutually repellant? What about your happiness, in view of such a relation, when it confronts you always and everywhere?

As between yourself and another human being the unhappiness engendered by the friction of one's presence might be measurably, if not altogether, neutralized through the separations of time and distance. But what think you when you cannot thus flee from the hated presence? When the element that engenders the hateful repulsion is ever present, irreconcilable, implacable? So long as such a relation continues, so long as you are consciously encompassed on all sides by One, between whom and you there is no harmony,—then farewell happiness, blessedness, peace and enter the dark brood of death.

Now an inquiry concerning a way by which there will be a reversal of all these conditions and results—think you is the same unimportant? An affirmative reply to such a query would be the saddest and strongest indication of your individual need of it.

You are also to bear in mind that next to being in peace and harmony with God, your greatest

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need—so far as the restful comfort of your spirit is concerned—is to be at peace with yourself.

You know what dire havoc conscience plays at times with this inward rest. It frequently enkindles in the minds of the enemies of God the very fires of hell while they are yet upon the earth. And often does it sorely chastise the souls of God's redeemed children. They walk in bondage and darkness and great discomfort until the evil thing, in reference to which conscience applies the lash, is penitently put away. A disturbed conscience is a bad bed-fellow.

"O, coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me;"

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,

And ever tongue brings a several tale,

And every tale condemns me for a villian."

"Now conscience wakes despair

That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory

Of what he was, what is, and what must be."

"Thus Conscience does make cowards of us all."

And what is true of conscience, as one of the factors of the soul's life, is also true of others. If there be friction in machinery it will not run smoothly. Destruction is at work. And similarly in the make-up of our personalities. There must be harmony between the various estates of

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mansoul or the evil results of civil war will be experienced and shown. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." There must be peace within all our soul's borders if the happiness and blessedness and fruitfulness of a sweet content is to be our portion. But we are each aware that the balance of power has been destroyed by sin and the normal harmonies of the inner life have ceased. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" even in the lives of God's children and would again abidingly lord it over them were it not for the divine help. But the consciousness of a progressive inner harmony with the assurance that the same will be at last perfected and abide forever—this brings the sweetness of the peace of heaven amid the warring conditions of the earthly life.

But to those who are not within the charmed circle of this goodly fellowship the elements and conditions of an abiding warfare in the soul are ever present. More pronounced in some they may be than in others, and in the same person at one time than at another. But this jarring discord within one's self will mar the soul life and be one of the conditions of the unspeakable wretchedness of the world to come. The perceiving of your understanding and the sober reflections and conclusions of your reason are

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swept aside and made of none effect as you are tossed about like foam upon the waters by the imperious power of your passions. Think you is such an adjustment of the relations of the respective powers of your being a guarantee, either that the angel of peace will become your guest, or, having entered your dwelling, that you can hope for his abiding presence to bless your soul?

Again, then, do I ask in all sobriety, whether an inquiry regarding a way of life which involves the restoration of the sweetness of inner harmony and the blessedness of being at peace with oneself, both now and forever—whether this be not one of overshadowing import? “Holy” is to be made “whole” or restored to perfect health. This is the goal for which the Apostle prayed. (I Thess. 5:23.) And being at peace with God and yourself the outgoings of your soul toward others will be along pathways over which the dove is flying. It will be that of good-will toward men.

Think you then that an inquiry concerning a way of life which will issue in the establishing of peace between your soul and God, peace in your soul, peace between your soul and your fellows—think you is this an inquiry of secondary moment? Nay, nay, but weighty as the issues are eternal.

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Then, too, not only the good or ill effects to oneself, from being in or out of the way, throw this question to the front among the great interests of life, but its importance is intensified in view of your unavoidable relation to other lives.

The Apostle expresses this fact when he says: "No man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself." So that it is wide of the truth to say—as some do in reference to certain people, who, in some respects may be living unworthily—"They do not harm any one but themselves." Scripture, history and all experience refute such a claim.

This mutual relation and influence in the realm of the spiritual is affirmed and beautifully illustrated by Paul in I Cor. xii. And the same fact in another connection, has been given poetic expression as follows:

"Like warp and woof all destinies
Are woven fast,
Linked in sympathy like the keys
Of an organ vast;
Pluck one thread and the whole ye mar;
Break but one
Of a thousand keys, and the paining jar
Through all will run.

This invests your life with an awful significance. To be helpful in influencing other lives

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for good, consciously or unconsciously—is it not worthy of your consecrated ambition? Will it not be among your present and most abiding joys? To freight other lives to lower levels—should not the possibility of this give you pause? And one or the other we must do.

If God has granted you the endearing relations and sweet fellowship of the family life, as a parent, how can you look into the confiding eyes of the precious little ones and realize that to them, for the time being, you are the exemplar after whom they are trustfully and lovingly, if unwittingly patterning—without being grasped by the thought of life's solemnities? To so stand related involves the holiest of joys—if it issue in their lives in the confirmation of all worthiness. To have them “arise and call you blessed”—the music of heaven is in this. But confirmation in any evil way through your agency—what a blackness of horror it will ultimately bring you. To have a child in the way of death justly point an accusing finger at you—this will make you feel the agonizing discord of the damned.

And the same holds good, or bad, in varying measure, through all the wider circles of the life that you now “lead in the flesh.” Whether you are in the way of life or out of it will mean much as to whether others are or are not to walk therein.

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It is an inquiry concerning a way, the walking in which will issue in "glory, honor, immortality." There is light, love, liberty, life in the highest measure, in the highest heavens, in the highest and goodliest fellowships of the ages, in the presence of the Highest, and that for ever and ever.

To refrain from it is to abide under the shadows of a way that issues in darkness unutterable. You will abide in the "outer darkness," in the "blackness of darkness," in hate, in bondage, in death, in the deepest measure, in the abysses, in the lowest and most evil companionships of the ages, in the presence of the great spirit of evil, and that for ever and ever.

And again I ask you whether an inquiry into these things is to be deemed unimportant or whether, on the other hand, it is of such overshadowing import that naught else in the heights or the depths should exclude it from thought and action.

And yet, in the face of all this mighty pressure of interest, such is the natural tendency and bias of the soul, through the alluring presence of sin, that it slumbers amid the play of contending forces, the warring of the spiritual realms of light and darkness.

Under the captivating and absorbing fascinations of divers lusts, pleasures and pursuits,

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legitimate or otherwise, often against the voices which its own saner self utters in more thoughtful moods, and against the gentle monitions of the invisible worlds, within and without, it is led on and on in procrastinating folly until "life's fitful fever" is suddenly ended and—does he rest well?

Wide awake, captive absorption in the things of time and sense while drowsily slumbering as to the abiding verities of the spiritual and eternal!

You lie abed of a morning under the spell of its comfort while perhaps aware that duty and interest are calling to be up betimes. And then with a troubled sense of loss you frantically pursue the fleeing opportunities and possibilities of the day, humming the refrain, "It might have been."

Yes, if life's day passes and the night comes and you find that, so far as the real issues of human destiny are concerned, you have been out of the way and your feet are beginning to "stumble on the dark mountains"—what a pitiable refrain for a memory mocked future to despairingly cry, "It might have been."

But why dwell further on this? Surely there is no need. Your soul must be in frivolous mood indeed, or held fast amid the slumbering of sensibilities induced by that great triumvirate of

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evil "the world, the flesh and the devil," if, in the presence of these considerations and under the pressure of these motives, you still regard the inquiry as one of little moment.

But I am persuaded better things of you.

"Life is real, life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal,
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

Voices from the past, from the present, from the future; voices from within, from without; voices from time, from eternity; voices from the great deeps, from the everlasting heights; are harmoniously attesting its destiny deciding import.

Enter upon it. Enter upon it.

CHAPTER II.

SIN.

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” The Saviour implies the sinner. Salvation presupposes sin. Without it both would be meaningless. Let us briefly consider it for it is one of the awful facts of the universe. It has entered our fair world. It is in each life. Its blasting presence is everywhere. But for it, what need of inquiring about God’s way of salvation.

What is it? To this many answers have been given from philosophical as well as from moral and religious view points. I recall the following declaration regarding life in an old text-book, “What life is we know not. What life does we know well.” The remark might be applied to sin, judging by the theories in reference to it.

But for our present purpose and your need take the following brief but comprehensive statement. “Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.”

We may look at the matter at first in a some-

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what apparently cold, logical and historical fashion, so as to judge from the facts how you are to be classified. Having done so we must then come to closer quarters as becometh inquirers and an inquiry related to the great things of life, death and immortality. And my hope is that the examination will set you forward in, or, at least, truly toward the pathway of life.

Well then how is it with you from the standpoint of a defective conformity to the law of God? There are sins of omission as well as of commission. God's children, under the guidance of the Spirit, pray for forgiveness not only for what they do which is contrary to the will of God, but also for what they fail in being and doing according to His requirements.

And this is true in all our earthly relations as well. In all of these there is the reign of law—albeit it may be and ought to be the law of love. And that law, whatever its expression, requires full consecration of the whole being from those who are living under it—be it the relation and law of friendship, or that of the citizen, or of the closer relations and intimacies of the family life. In all of these the demand is that we rise up to the full measure of that ideal—the pattern of which was shown in the mount of God. Failing in this we are not what the law contemplates we should

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be. Its majesty is offended. And if provision be not made in some way by which your defect can be reconciled with the perfect maintenance of its majesty, then you will be the one to suffer for failure to reach up to and move companionably with it along the high plane where it lives and moves and has its being. And, for the present, we are not taking into consideration any such provision. You are to stand in your own strength in rigid relation to the laws of whatever sphere you occupy. And any failure to rise to the perfect measure of the law of that sphere will be an offence to it. It will resent it. You have not perfectly conformed yourself to the law of the realm of friendship, of citizenship, of parental, marital, or filial responsibility, as the case may be. You are, therefore, in relation thereto, a sinner from defect, from omission, from a want of conformity.

As a child you may possibly be able to say in reference to parental law, "Neither at any time transgressed I thy commandment," while yet the fact may remain that in disposition, thought, purpose, effort, you have fallen short of a universal, unfailing, and generous surrender of yourself, as was meet, to the loving furtherance of all domestic interests. Times there were when conduct was influenced by a cold, calculating prudence, which, while not stopping short of the bald, literal re-

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quirements of duty, yet did not overleap them in deference to the spirit of an obedience rendered in love. While actual transgression may not be charged up against you, yet clearly you are not conformed in heart, in all the elements of your being, to the law which should govern your filial relationship.

Similarly as between husband and wife may there be witnessed a fulfillment of obligations which, after a fashion, entitles each to mutually deny the charge of transgression, while yet there is all along a woeful absence of conformity to the spirit of the law which should govern their relation.

And this results in the neutralizing of that sweet fellowship that would otherwise be. The place thereof is usurped or supplanted by a painful consciousness of wounded sensibilities. Duties are decorously attended to from day to day. But they are only so many automatic movements out of which the soul of music has fled. Fulfilled, possibly, with scrupulous fidelity, the family life has yet become a formal routine, from the cold respectability of which love has taken its flight to more genial climes.

"The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled."

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Absence of conformity, in spirit as well as in fact, from the very foundations of the being in the inner dispositions, upward and outward through all the expressed life, is to be and is recognized as an offence, a sin, against the high and holy behests of righteous law.

And if this be so as to life's human relations what about those you sustain to the divine? What is true of the one is also of the other. Only in the latter the absence of conformity, in view of the inconceivably higher nature of the relation, is a sin which is unspeakably intensified. He who said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," said also, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind." This goes to the very foundation elements of one's being, requiring "truth in the inward parts." And if your response does not rise up to the full measure of this universal requirement there is a lack of harmony between your being and that of the holy One. To that extent you are unholy, defective, not conformable to the nature and character of Him before whom angels covered their faces as they cried: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." Were it possible for you to say, "Neither at any time transgressed I thy commandment," the question of conformity to the divine character

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and will throughout the whole gamut of your being would still have to be met and answered. And, in the absence of an answer universally affirmative, you thereby acknowledge a rift in the lute of your life, the dissonance of which indicates that between you and God there is a failure in concord. And this failure means the presence of the element of evil. You come short of the glory of God. Weighed in the balance and found wanting. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Any failure as to congeniality between your inmost nature and God adjudges you to be unholy—that is sinful. To that extent you are not like the holy One. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders," "Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:" "All these things come from within and defile the man." Surely when the fruits are so unholy, the tree—that is the inner nature, fountain, disposition or spring of action—cannot be holy. It is sinful. It is not conformed to God.

A man may not, for the time being, transgress a prohibitory requirement because of the absence of temptation. But let the spark be applied and, lo, the absence of inner conformity suddenly re-

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veals itself in positive transgression. Transgression is an active devil. Want of conformity is a sleeping one.

And if this be true along the lower ranges of life so also and much more along the higher. You may not be so explosive as another. Walpole said, "Every man has his price." It took more to convert the sleeping into an active devil in one than it did in another. But the possibility was in all. The process of the conversion is thus stated by the poet Pope:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen,
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

If your nature were fully conformed to the divine this dalliance with evil would not be permitted. Neither would you at any time have need to shed a tear of repentance in view of its frequent and victorious forays.

The deep and ever present consciousness of this absence of full inner conformity to the character and will of God, extorted from the Apostle to the Gentiles the agonizing cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

And those who have had the largest knowledge

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of themselves, the deepest experience of the inner movements of sin, the most enrapturing visions of Him who is the "Chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely," the intensest yearnings after that holiness by which larger measure of the joys of divine fellowship would be their abiding portion—these choicest and saintliest spirits of the race have ever been the ones to prostrate themselves before the Holy One in deepest humility. The larger the vision of the sinless One the greater the consciousness of and shrinking from sin. The rapt spirit of Isaiah, beholding the glory of the Lord, exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." The confession thereof, in all sincerity and humility, will attest the sinfulness of all absence of conformity to God as well as be an evidence of your holiness. The absence of such confession will attest your sinfulness and the measure of your spiritual ignorance. On either showing you will class yourself, or you will be classed, as among the number of those whose needs call for the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness" and the putting forth of the cry after a "clean heart and a right spirit."

How is it with you then as to the conformity

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of your inner self to God? Be still and commune with your own heart and, in the light of its revelations, or, if you please, the awful darkness thereof, as beheld in the light of God, be under the constraint of humbly bowing before him with the confession, "I am a sinful man O Lord."

Now leaving the inner and more invisible region for the outer and more tangible sphere of transgression, are matters improved? If the former is of the nature of sin the latter is visibly and palpably so. Absence of inner harmony cannot be abidingly yoked to outer concord with God. Satan may attempt hypocritically to transform himself in appearance into an angel of God, but the mask cannot abide. "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" But the question now is not the possibility of an outward conformity, as to the matter of obedience, which is at the same time vitiated before God because of its relation to an inner absence of conformity. On the contrary it is one simply of actual transgression. You do not hesitate to acknowledge the sinfulness of this. It is a positive violation of law, written or unwritten. Acts and words and thoughts may be equally reprehensible as to matter while there may be variations in the guiltiness of the personalities behind them.

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You, under the light of a christian civilization, transgress. And the matter of your transgression may be precisely similar to that of another whose life and surroundings are pagan. What of your sin as compared to his? "To whom much is given of them much shall be required." For you, as a result, there is awaiting the infliction of many stripes while he will be visited with few.

So also as to the matter of transgression in your own life at different stages. It may be precisely similar at one time as at another while the guilt thereof may vary greatly. "Some sins in themselves and by reason of several aggravations are more heinous in the sight of God than others."

There may thus be heights and depths of sin, mountain ranges and sky piercing peaks of transgression, billowy upheavals of iniquity—but underneath all these phenomenal exhibitions of sin's forceful, and daring depravity, there are the continental and oceanic stretches, characteristic of the multitudinous millions of all times and ages.

Your soul may rise up in an intense manifestation of righteous wrath, or be melted into unutterable pathos, in view of the transgressions of men against the law of love. There are many Jacobs whose hearts are broken and whose grey hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave

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because of filial transgression. Poor King Lear, in the wild agony of his spirit, under the base treatment of one of his daughters, cried:

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child!”

You exclaim against these and all other violations of the laws of man’s most cherished and holy relations. What think you then when the relation and the violation are not human but divine? Isaiah declares the enormity of this in the following vivid terms: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.”

It is bad enough as between man and man. But as between man and his Maker it is horrible. Sometimes even the very brutes put him to shame. A farmer started to plow a field with a yoke of oxen. Something having gone wrong he flew into a great rage and beat one of the oxen unmercifully. Shortly afterward, passing in front of the ox, the abused animal raised his large eyes toward him and licked his arm. This act brought so forcefully to the mind of the man a discourse he had recently heard from the text, “The ox

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knoweth his owner, etc." that he could not proceed with his work. He unyoked his oxen with the result that he was led penitently to God and he inscribed over the stall of the now favorite ox the text, "The ox knoweth his owner, etc."

Because of what God is—a Spirit, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth—to so act is the exhibition of criminal ignorance or unutterably foolhardy, impious daring.

Because of what God does—loading us daily with his benefits and with loving patience bearing with our unnumbered provocations—to so act is such an exhibition of deep dyed ingratitude, such a self-willed departure from God, that the prophet calls upon the heavens to express their astonishment: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Inanimate nature shews forth the praise of God and the animate but irrational worlds fulfill his will, a dumb brute recognizes his owner and licks the hand that abuses him—but man, upon whom God lavishes the treasures of his goodness, not only fails to gratefully respond, but spurns

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the hand stretched forth in blessing, blasphemes the name of the holy One and tramples upon the laws which are "holy and just and good."

How is it with you then? Does not your conscience unmistakably say, "Thou art the man"? Whether it be a want of conformity or active transgression, in any event, is it not true that your "mouth must be stopped and you become guilty before God"—you yourself being judge? Can you say aught else than to utter "I am a sinner"?

But, as to transgression of law, you are not to be unmindful of the fact that, even were you so fortunate as to escape the accusing finger pointed in condemnation because of grossly violated law, there was still a continental area beneath this filled with unnumbered hosts of sins, possible and actual, because of the inner, invisible, spiritual applications of the law.

The Decalogue may, in your estimation, looking at it superficially, merely refer to what is external in life and conduct. On such a supposition the belief may be entertained that it is a comparatively easy matter to keep the commandments. As a result you may bear yourself jauntily in view of the supposedly limited area requiring your watchful care and because of the good success attending your effort—you yourself being

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judge—to keep this area free from sin's marauding bands. You are living in the enjoyment of a peace to which you are not entitled and which is ill grounded—it is another case, as the prophet says, of crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

You have never killed anybody or committed adultery. You are honest and speak the truth. Good, so far as it goes. But you must bear in mind that the law extends to the *whole man*. Whatever there is of us, as to our makeup or personality, from our innermost dispositions and thoughts right up and through to the outermost verge of our expressed life—over all this territory the law claims and exercises jurisdiction. It has to do with *me* in all that constitutes me a separate individuality. So when the law says, "Thou shalt not kill," it does not follow because you have never been guilty of murder, as recognized by a civil tribunal, that therefore you are not a violator of this law. Anything at all in you, however faint, in the way of disposition or thought, which, if developed in harmony with its nature, would lead to the act of murder, or to anything else forbidden, is a transgression of the commandment just as truly as would be the out-breaking deed.

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In fact even the literal consideration, at least of one of the commandments, will illustrate this. Take the third: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," and you think of words. Take the sixth, or seventh, or eighth, and not words but deeds involuntarily rise up before your thought. But now consider the tenth: "Thou shalt not covet, etc." and instead of words and deeds, thoughts and dispositions are evidently summoned before its bar.

In harmony with this spiritual extension of the law's applications was the declaration of the Lord of life himself, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'"

Here then is an area from which your utmost vigilance cannot prevent the inroads of the Midianites of sin. They roam everywhere. Over all are hanging the black thunder clouds of doom and the lightnings of a coming judgment which shall be rendered according to the law "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

Being thus swept within the compass of the law's applications, from the Alpha to the Omega of your being, what say you of yourself before God, as to your guilt or innocence, as to your

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freedom or bondage? The Apostle says, "All the world becomes guilty before God." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." What say you? Ah! What can you say but, "I am a sinful man, O Lord."

You have been considering sin in its relations from the view point of the presence or absence of conformity or transgression. But now look for a moment at sin, not as to its relations, but as to its appearance. How does it look? The phrase, "Ugly as sin," would seem to indicate the prevailing popular judgment regarding its looks. This finds memorable expression in literature in the second book of *Paradise Lost*. Satan in his flight arrives at hellbounds:

"Before the gates there sat,
On either side, a formidable shape:
The one seemed woman to the waist and fair;
But ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast; a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting: About her middle round
A cry of Hellhounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberian mouths full loud, and rang
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still bark'd and howl'd
Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
Vex'd Scylla, bathed in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;

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Nor uglier follow the night hag, when call'd
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the laboring moon
Eclipses at their charms."

The follows a description of the "formidable shape" guarding the other side of the gate—more sublimely horrible still. The one shape was—Sin. The other was her offspring—Death. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." They were both children of the devil.

"By their fruits ye shall know them:" And when you see the fruits of sin in the earth and realize its movement in your own life, even superficially, surely the conviction is forced upon you, however meager the beholding, that sin is the most awful, horrible and frightfully deformed thing in the universe.

Sin and the devil are the very antipodes of all that God is. And its blighting and damning presence, through the long and sorrow-laden history of our poor, sin-cursed race, is but a faint revelation of its possibilities.

Dark and repellant are the "fruits of the flesh" when contrasted with those of the Spirit by the Apostle in Gal. V. And this, too, when viewed at long range from within the precincts of Christian society and Christian homes. Darker and

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more horrible are they when beheld in volcanic activity and in all their revolting shamelessness and cruelty in pagan lands and in the "submerged tenth" of Christian lands. Yet all this is brightness when contrasted with the conditions which would be realized, even in this world, were it not for the restraining and universally operative influences of the Spirit of God. "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford," said an old minister, pointing to a condemned criminal on his way to the gallows.

But enough. What say you? Looking at it as a want of inner conformity or as actual transgression, or in the light of its hideous deformity as the offspring of the devil, in utter and eternal antagonism to God, can you do aught else than fall prostrate before Him, saying in humble confession, "I am a sinful man, O Lord."

CHAPTER III.

GUILT, CONDEMNATION, POLLUTION.

According to the law, then, and the evidence converging upon you from various sources, it is concluded and you yourself conclude, that you are a sinful and sinning soul. There must be pronounced upon you the word which has been so frequently awaited, in earthly courts, with bated breath,—the word "Guilty."

But in your case it is so much the more serious and awful a matter by so much as the heavens are higher than the earth. You are not simply guilty before one or more of your fellows, with its consequent temporal results, but, as the Apostle says, you are "guilty before God." This involves results which are eternal and terrible beyond the power of your imagination to conceive. And you have nothing to answer for yourself in view of the declaration "that every mouth may be stopped." Guilty, guilty, echoes through your soul as all your faculties confirm the decision of the All-seeing One.

There may be a natural impulse to flee—to hide

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yourself. Adam, under the consciousness of his guilt, was thus moved. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

"And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And from this initial exhibition of the impulse and its failure, the same is true onward through the sacred record, until in Revelation the very madness of this despairing desire is voiced in the cry,—as mountains and rocks are apostrophised—"Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

As to any hope you might have of a successful escape by flight from the pursuing justice of your fellowmen, what will it avail, when you have to do with him who says: "Though they dig into hell thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down:

And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them."

The consciousness of guilt—what a millstone on the elasticity of your life! For many another be-

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sides the Thane of Cawdor has it "murdered sleep." The sense of it drove Judas and many another to self-destruction. To carry such a skeleton around with you—ah me! How it will mar the brightness of life and eat as doth a canker. The whole tendency and influence thereof is to convert you into a suspicious, nervous coward, when otherwise you would be a courageous, free, aggressive soul. Look at the brethren of Joseph, recognizing in their guilty souls the seeming harshness of the latter as an avenging Nemesis for their old time crime. "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And again, after the burial of their father,—notwithstanding the whole-hearted assurances of goodwill already so freely granted by Joseph and abundantly attested by kindly deeds—their guilt arose, like Banquo's ghost, to disturb their peace. "And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him."

Its conscious presence has over and over again been such a fire in the bones, burning in the soul like a veritable hell—which by anticipation it was

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—that it has driven men to give themselves over to justice rather than endure the awful inner agony.

And you are not only guilty, but the same is intensified and aggravated because of the light of knowledge in the face of which you are what you are. If the Apostle could affirm that those who enjoyed simply the light of nature—the bedimmed revelations of the law written in their hearts—were yet without excuse, how much more, when, in addition, you have the written law of the Lord, the Scriptures of truth, in which “life and immortality are brought to light.” And not only have them but you have seen them illustrated in the lives of saintly men and women—the light of God shining round about you in manifold ways. You stand forth, as a sinner in the face of unnumbered blessings, and the fact deepens the fatefulness of the word “guilty” as you hear it in the solemn stillnesses of the soul.

But being guilty what then? The sense or consciousness of guilt, brought home to you by manifold evidence from without and within,—is that the end of it? Justice forbids. That is neither according to human law, which may err, nor after the manner of the divine, which cannot. There must follow the condemning words of the judge. Sentence is pronounced and while it may

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not be executed immediately, or speedily, as we reckon duration on earth, yet the day of its full visitation draweth nigh. One man is impressed with these great verities and inquires as to how they may be averted—how life may take the place of death. Another, as Solomon says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore his heart is fully set in him to do evil."

But now we will consider whether there be any ray of hope shining in the darkness, and encouraging you to believe that either the legal declaration of your guilt may be averted, or, failing in that, that then the sentence may be modified or neutralized. There are various possibilities in this connection, so far as an earthly tribunal is concerned. May they also be entertained in relation to the divine? By one or the other of them, or all combined, the earthly hope may be indulged that you may not be adjudged guilty. Even while self-condemned, but innocent at the bar of public opinion and before the law, there may yet be present the hope and belief that detection may be abidingly averted. The person is continuously on guard to keep the veil of secrecy drawn between the crime and the possible avenger.

But I need not wait to dwell on the futility of such a hope or effort when you have to do—not

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with man but with God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." But, being detected, there may still remain the hope and possibility of freedom. This stimulates to strenuous effort. There may, for example, exist such social relations and ties between the accused and influential persons in various walks of life, outside of legal circles as well as within, that the force of their influence may suffice to avert the sentence. The same may be true, as it frequently has been, on the score of financial ability—either on the part of the culprit himself or that of his friends. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty." This condition has served to defeat the ends of justice and has, time and again, furnished a prop to the hope of offenders. So also has political influence furnished the lever by which those really guilty have yet been declared innocent and have gone unwhipt of justice. There is always present the possibility that, in view of the erring frailties of everything human, one may be adjudged guilty—being innocent. And likewise that one may be declared innocent—being guilty.

In such a case conscious innocence on the one hand, in the gloom of dungeons, may fill the soul

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with the serenity of heaven. Witness Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. On the other hand, conscious guilt, amid the freedom and amenities of the outer world, may torture the soul with the very elements of future torment. But however any or all of these possibilities may hold, or not, before man, of what avail will they be before God? You surely cannot hope to hide the fact of guilt from the All-seeing nor thus avert its declaration. And before him there is no possibility of comfort arising from injured innocence.

But you are to regard yourself not only as guilty and condemned but also as polluted. Sin is an altogether vile and loathsome thing before God. Moral purity, wherever found, and in proportion to its presence, shrinks from it. You are not only guilty of an offense against the laws of God, in view of which you are condemned, but you have thereby rendered yourself unfit for, and disinclined from, association with what is pure and holy. "What concord hath Christ with Belial? and what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Were it possible to throw open the gates of heaven for your entrance, while thus polluted, you would either not enter, or, if you did, your vileness would be so borne in upon you in view

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of its purity, that you would flee therefrom as from a place of torment. Like Judas you would have to go to "your own place" and that place would not be heaven. It is this element of the unfitness for the society of God which presents the deepest shadows in the awful hopelessness of your future.

Sin's loathsome vileness in the sight of God you may realize when you consider the frequency with which, under various figures, the sacred writers dwell upon it.

Now it is exhibited as a violation of the purity of the marriage relation and branded with the name of spiritual adultery. Or again, of the ruination of character and the blasting of earthly hopes by sensual indulgence, before entering the holy estate of wedlock. And so the prophets with awful energy and solemnity dwell at length upon the vileness, the unnaturalness, the waywardness, the folly, the ingratitude of those guilty of spiritual adultery and fornication. The consequences to themselves would be lamentable.

Then again we have it figured under the aspect of that loathsome disease—the leprosy. "It was *polluting, spreading* (in respect to the person affected), *transmissive* and *incurable* by any known remedy. It was therefore the *standing symbol of sin*, the most malignant evil in God's universe."

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Or, look again at the marvellously vivid picture of its vileness which Paul places before us in Rom. VII. The intensity of his own realization of it extorted the cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Some have understood the Apostle as here referring to the ancient punishment of fastening a dead body to a living one. In that event you will realize more vividly the unutterable abomination attaching to sin as an element hateful to God and to a soul spiritually renewed. How you would shrink from such an oppressive and loathsome presence. You bury your dead out of your sight because of these things. But to think of carrying about with you such vileness and to be holding fellowship with death!

This aspect of sin is involved in the prayers found in the Scriptures and in the devotional literature of the Church in all ages, as well as in the direct declaration of the Bible. "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

"Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypo-

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crites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." And so of the saints regarding themselves, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee?"

The nearer you are to God in character the more hateful does sin appear. The nearer to God the larger and keener will be the vision of self. Sin will be revealed to you in such guise as to compel confessions, which, to those who are strangers to such fellowship and self-revealings, may seem to indicate either gross self-deception or a worse moral condition than their own. But not so. It is only the difference between natural and spiritual discernment or between degrees of the latter—the difference between the microscope and the unaided eye.

And if, with our limited apprehension, it is yet possible to so behold its nature, tendencies and results, in ourselves and others, as to regard it with unutterable loathing, what think you must be the attitude toward it of Him whose vision grasps all its hideous possibilities from beginning to end?

You lift the covering from some place shut out from the sunlight. And you are startled at the revelation. There are dwellers in darkness

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there. And they are startled too. Repulsive and slimy forms, mayhap—how they wriggle, writhe or scurry hither and thither as best they may.

In the light of God let your heart be uncovered and there will be startling revelations. What horror of soul when the searchlights of God are turned upon the inner corruption and the creeping things of sin stand revealed. In the view of it you stand afar off, consciously unfit for fellowship with the Holy One. You cry "unclean, unclean."

Guilty, condemned, polluted, as you are sinking in the horrible pit and miry clay, you cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "What must I do?" To such a cry the ears of Him who delighteth in mercy will not be heavy that they cannot hear, nor will his hand be shortened that it cannot save."

CHAPTER IV.

PENAL RESULTS (CERTAINTY).

Being guilty, polluted, condemned, you then must face the question of punishment. Your spiritual character and state being and remaining what it is there is no possibility of avoiding the retributions of the future. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished."

Leaving other phases of this question to be considered in the chapters that follow, let us inquire at present concerning its certainty.

As to the possibility of your avoiding it, the same considerations which were suggested in the last chapter for that purpose, regarding your guilt and condemnation, will also apply here. You will remember that such possibilities as hiding, or fleeing, or the effective intervention of others through social, financial, or political influence, were considered, and had to be set aside as utterly futile before God. There being absolutely no well-grounded hope in that direction, so far as your being found guilty and condemned, so also

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is there none from these so far as the averting of future punishment is concerned. While this might be sufficient to reveal the hopelessness and pitiable helplessness of your spiritual plight, yet there are one or two additional possibilities, which may be taken into account. But they only help to deepen the dark shadows of despair which exclude the vision of any possible avenue of escape. They are adduced here because apparently they have a more especial bearing on the possible avoidance of punishment than upon that of a legally pronounced guilt or condemnation.

Some have, for example, sought to avert or forestall the suffering of the penalty pronounced by the state by the commission of suicide. A very futile subterfuge it is true, but one by which they imagine to cheat the state or defeat justice as to the letter and conserve, in their own estimation, the question of their honor. But whatever was or was not gained or averted by self-destruction, in such a case, the fact still remained that life had to be given up to satisfy the offended majesty of law. The escape was more imaginary than real. What did it boot that the exit from life was by some self-applied agency rather than by that of the halter of the state, so long as the forced exit which the law demanded had to be endured? But

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even that poor consolation will be denied you as to the penalty for your sins. That which has been declared will surely come to pass in God's time and after the divine method, without any power of yours to delay or change. You may cheat the state as to the method of your exit, or the time thereof, or both. But you cannot annihilate your spirit. You must abide the sentence of the Almighty.

Then again, you may, so far as earthly offenses and their results are concerned, be living in a community where, for capital offenses, capital punishment is not inflicted. You do not in this case, escape the visitation of penalty, but what may be deemed a less severe form thereof is your portion.

Or, while capital punishment may be the law for the crime of which you are guilty, you may yet escape it by its being commuted to something else. In either case the death penalty is avoided. But not so in the realm of the spirit. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The offense is capital and so also is the punishment. And there is no commutation. It is true that in the experience of the death penalty one may suffer more than another—both on account of the nature of his own mental and physical constitution, as well as from

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the positive methods of its infliction. For these reasons the pain may be of the most excruciating character in one instance while comparatively mild in another. But, in either case, the death sentence is visited.

So also in the moral world. There is a revelation made of the fact that in the future world, while the death sentence has been passed and is visited upon all against whom it is declared, yet the realization of it by some is not what it is in the experience of others. Some are beaten with "many stripes" and others with only "few," because of the responsibilities of present life privileges or the absence of them. "To whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required." This gradation will hold as between the heathen world and the lands where the light of life has come. And within the latter, as between those surrounded with favoring conditions when compared with those whose surroundings are untoward. To go into the future unsaved from a land where the radiant light of the gospel is shed from many sources, and, perchance, with many aggravating elements in view of unimproved opportunities, is to go where, in number and severity, the stripes will be very many. In any event and under all considerations it is a fact of awful

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solemnity and it certainly awaits the unsaved without any hope of being averted or commuted.

There are other reasons worthy of mention in view of which you might escape the infliction of the death penalty from man.

There might be something in your own antecedent character so worthy as to commend you to the mercy of the court. The special act because of which you were exposed to the utmost severity of the law was in such violent contradiction to your past record that it led to a modification of the sentence by the judge.

Or, in consideration of your youth, inexperience, and the absence of an appropriate appreciation on your part of the nature of the crime committed, you may be more leniently dealt with than might otherwise be.

Then there may be various extenuating elements entering into the case, as also considerations arising from your relation to those dependent upon you, all of which may tell on the issue.

The state itself may conclude to commute your sentence should you help it in securing the conviction of other offenders by confessing your own offenses and telling what you know of theirs.

All these may exist as to the deserved judgments of man but there is no room for them in the

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court of God. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

A slender hope might exist because of a possible custom, in view of which, at certain times, prisoners might be released. "Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would." But there is no such custom in the history of the divine government. Were there, surely there would be a record of its exercise, for a glimmer of hope amid the gloom. Little hope for you, apart from the divine way of life, when the cup could not pass from the Son of God himself.

But then in the earthly life, there may be some social upheaval in which a criminal may be fortunate enough to secure his liberty. Something, for example, like the events attendant upon the revolution in France in which the Bastille gave up the condemned. The ray of hope engendered by it may be very feeble and flickering, it is true.

Or, there may be a social or political need calling for the help of the condemned. This has sometimes been the case when epidemics raged and those to render the offices of humanity were few. Condemned ones were given their liberty

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and a chance for life on condition of ministering to the needs of the afflicted.

So also in the necessities arising from protracted sieges or wars the military ranks have been recruited from the ranks of the condemned. Liberty and life have thus at times come to those who were adjudged as forfeiting both. But what hope for such possibilities in the movements of the divine order?

It has been the case that persons condemned and immured awaiting the execution of the sentence have yet, in one way or other, effected their escape. This is among the commonplaces of human history. It has been accomplished directly by their own skill or strength, or others have come to their rescue and wrought their deliverance with superior might.

But surely it is not necessary to inquire whether this be possible for you in the realm of the spiritual. What canst thou do to break through the barrier of the divine government?

And who, among the sons of men, will enter the lists in thy behalf to forcefully contend with the Almighty?

Were such conflict initiated against an authority unjustly established and arbitrarily exercised, there might be present the sublimity of true heroism, even while experiencing the crushing re-

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sults of superior force. Such resistance would be an inspiration to others and a life so sacrificed would not go out in vain.

But this is impossible in relation to God. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" "Thy right hand is full of righteousness." "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." "The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter." Not only righteously established but lovingly exercised for the good of the creature. "The law is holy and just and good." Whoever exclaims against it, either as to its nature or exercise, does so because these characteristics are not congenial to his own nature or in harmony with his conduct.

There is neither any hope of victory in such a contest, with its attendant life and liberty, nor is there the presence of the comforting inspiration that the sacrifice of your life will have, at least, a halo of patriotic glory for yourself and not be fruitless for good as to others.

Be a martyr for God and you will shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Be a martyr against him and your candle will go out in darkness and the silence of a loveless oblivion will be your self-prepared portion.

There is another alternative not to be overlooked. With it we close the consideration of this part of our inquiry.

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In an earthly court the judge may righteously condemn. And yet this sentence may afterward be set aside by the exercise of the pardoning power on the part of the executive. And this, too, independently of the righteousness of the condemned one. His guilt remains. So also the justice of the sentence under which he is enduring the outraged law's penalty. But in the exercise of his prerogative the chief executive may extend pardon irrespective of the man's deserts. More than one Barrabas has thus gone forth to liberty and sin—unchanged in character.

But this is impossible in the spiritual realm. To do so God would have to deny himself—his law being but the expression of what he is. To permit it to be trampled on, without upholding its integrity and honor, would be to abdicate—and chaos and death would ascend the throne. But not so. There can be no reprieve until the uttermost farthing is paid.

There is henceforth naught for you—in the absence of a condemnation justly cancelled and of a life righteously obtained—but a “certain fearful looking for of fiery indignation” and a bondage, the most galling, amid seeming liberty. “Who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.”

If not this, then a more appalling condition still

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—even that of one guilty and condemned, moving forward with the ungrounded peace and assurance of self-ignorance and God-ignorance. The yawning abyss lies in the pathway, while the song of the deluded one is, "soul take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." And possibly God is saying, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

"There is a time we know not when,
A point we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

"There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

"To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth,
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Or pale the glow of health.

"The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirits light and gay,
That which is pleasing still may please
And care be thrown away.

"But on that forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark
Unseen by men; for men as yet
Are blind and in the dark.

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"Oh! where is this mysterious bourne
By which our path is crossed?
Beyond which God himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost.

"How far may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end and where begin
The confines of despair?

"An answer from the skies is sent
—Ye that from God depart
While it is said 'To-day—repent
And harden not your heart.'"

CHAPTER V.

PENAL RESULTS (NATURE).

Being shut up to punishment for sin without any hope of escape then the question of its nature assumes deep interest. Whether it may or may not be of such a character as to justify the intensest apprehension—this will have a determining effect on your attitude towards sin here and its results in the hereafter. If, in your estimation, there be not much to fear, then the “pleasures of sin” though they be but “for a season” may secure your devotion. If, on the other hand, it be revealed to you as appalling beyond present conception, then sin’s fascination may be broken and your otherwise indifference under declared condemnation, may be turned into the keenest solicitude.

That it *is* of such a nature as to justify your alarmed interest and arouse your deepest and continued fear, will, I trust, be readily seen and appreciated when you soberly consider some of its elements.

You are to regard these as embracing not only

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penal results which are the natural and inevitable outgrowth of sin, but also, in addition, others which are to be positively or immediately inflicted.

Then, too, you are not to be unmindful that, while your soul is the chief factor in your personality you are yet the possessor of a body which, in some form, will continue to be a part of you in your future existence. This will be a sharer, after its kind, in the deplorable issues of your present life as a sinner. All of those, then, you must not, by any means, overlook, when you estimate the nature and possibilities of future suffering in view of sin. Any one of them would be appalling enough, but, taken in combination, their effect should be to lead you with irrepressible and undying earnestness to inquire, "What must I do?"

It is said of Judas that he went to "his own place." And he is called the "Son of perdition." There is a place, then, where sinners gravitate in harmony with their nature. Their repulsions and affinities are such that they determine of themselves what the future destiny is to be. So long as these remain, that destiny could not be other than it is. No mere arbitrary change of place would work a reversal of condition. On the contrary it might the rather intensify the pain-

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ful elements of the untoward estate. In a city you find houses of an immoral character gravitating to their kind in certain quarters and streets. And the inner degradation tends more and more to be reflected in their material and visible surroundings. Over all is written "Unclean, unclean." Now it would make no difference to arbitrarily change their location. Put them amid the pure and palatial and the blight of their presence would soon be seen in externally degraded and degrading transformations. Take one such and plant it amid influences and associations, righteous and holy and true, and the consequent restraint would become irksome and lead to shiftings where the sorry comfort of a common wretchedness might be realized amid more congenial surroundings and companions. It was their own place.

And, as here, so in the life beyond. The morally polluted, the souls alienated from God by sin, will, in the very nature of things, and by choice, gravitate away from fellowships which are holy. They will each go, by a selection according to natural law, to "their own place." In the future were such souls arbitrarily placed amid holy associations, their moral repulsions would only intensify their pain by the ever present and wretched consciousness of being "out of place." While there are places called hell and heaven,

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yet the elements of pain characteristic of the one and of pleasure as to the other would measurably companion souls independently of location. They could not deny themselves nor flee from their fixed nature, so that, in a measure, hell and heaven would be wherever they were.

But look now at some of the penal elements naturally making up this inner hell which will torture you in your lost future estate. They will, of course, be mainly of a mental or spiritual nature.

One of the most painful, we may believe, will be the working of an accusing conscience. It sits in judgment on our appetites, lusts, passions, choices,—all our inner as well as manifested life—and, in the light of an immutable standard of righteousness, declares them to be sinful or holy. There results the consciousness of guilt or innocence, condemnation or approval, along with varying emotions of pleasure or pain. These emotions will be more or less lively and effective in their results according to the vigor with which the conscience works as well as the clearness of the revelation made to the soul of that standard according to which the decisions of conscience are rendered.

There may, it is true, be a dimness for a time on all the glory of this vicegerent of God in your

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soul and upon the eternal law of righteousness before whose bar its office is to bring you. You may hear its voice but faintly. You may see the law but dimly. And to what you do hear and see you may give but little heed. Thus for a little while here you may pursue your course in comparative comfort. It may even, amid the bondage of corruption and a life altogether out of harmony with the law of righteousness, permit you to say "Soul take thine ease." So said the fool, who, shortly after, had his eyes opened in hell, "being in torment."

But, usually, it is more or less awake and active in the performance of its divinely assigned duty. And, in that event, its decisions, in varying degree, breathe through the soul the sweetness, the comfort, the health, the joy of a conscious inner harmony, or, on the other hand, of an anarchy where the dove of peace cannot abide. This may be and frequently is so realized that the "peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the heart and mind" as a foretaste of the heaven that is to be. So also may there be such an awful inner sense of warfare with righteousness, breeding in the soul such fearful elements of unrest as are veritable forerunners of the endless gnawings and quenchless burnings of the hell that is yet to be.

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And this, too, depends not so much on the actual unrighteousness of which you may be guilty as upon the keenness of your insight into the spiritual nature, workings, and applications of the divine law. Sometimes the veil has been lifted and an exceptional revelation has been made to men of themselves, of their inner want of harmony with God, of their antagonism to the divine, of the length and breadth and height and depth of the law as it swept the inner departments of their being within the compass of its applications. As the result, they were so grasped and shaken by it as to writhe and groan in awful agony of spirit. And yet, so far as actual, manifested sins were concerned, their lives were clean as compared to others, who, in the absence of this inner revelation, were going forward in sin with thoughtless levity.

And if this be so amid the imperfect revelations of self, of law, of conscience, in the life that now is, you may well pause appalled at the awful possibilities of the future world. You shall there stand forth under the blazing consciousness of what you really are as a sinner, of what sin truly is, of the way in which God regards it, of the law's grasp upon your whole being and the consequent unintermitting lashings of a now fully aroused and unerring conscience. Under a very imperfect

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measure of these things here men have tossed restlessly upon their pillows, sleep has departed, appetite has forsaken them, they have fled as if pursued by chastising scorpions, health has broken down, insanity has been engendered, and, in order to escape this damnation of hell upon earth, they have voluntarily surrendered themselves to the "powers that be" to suffer for crimes of which they themselves alone had knowledge. Well, then, in view of it, with what awful significance is the query of God, by the prophet, clothed: "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?"

When the Lord fights against you with the "sword of his mouth," as he has affirmed he will, then what canst thou do? The sword of his mouth is his word and to suffer the piercings of that will be awful beyond expression.

Words are expressive of spirit life. And what are any and all other forces as compared with that of spirit? Nothing can wound or work such terrible wretchedness and desolation as a war in which the combatants and blows are all spiritual—inflicted by the tongue, the pen or the press. Here a word is spoken, and it enters another soul, rankling, festering and making it feverish with the fire of hell. And the outcome may be the utter blasting of happiness, the kindling of such

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fires as will bring ruin to the one who spoke it as well as to the one in reference to whom it was spoken.

You draw this sword of the mouth in destructive warfare, and reputations are blasted, character beclouded, hearts crushed, and the dark, damp air of despair settles down upon some otherwise sunny, domestic hearthstone.

You draw this sword, and in its use there is conjured up from the great deep such hosts of black and malignant things as torture souls, and make demons exult in the carnival of misery.

You draw this sword, and in its use friends are separated, love is supplanted by hate, domestic discord enters where peace reigned, neighbors are at variance, churches are rent asunder, countenances illumined by the sunshine of life become changed into blackness, hearts quiver with pain, life becomes a charnel house, filled with the dead and dying elements of old joys—a burden so grievous that relief is often sought in the silence of the tomb. All this and more of tragedy is found among men, because they fight against each other with the swords of their mouths.

Now if this be so even with the swords of *our* mouths, what, think you, must it be with the sword of *God's* mouth? Amid the heart lacerations suffered from these cruel human mouth-

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swords, one may have the consolation arising from the assurance that they are undeserved. The answer of a good conscience will be a well-spring of life, bringing refreshment of spirit amid the fires. You may find refuge in the consideration that the sword of this, that or the the other person's mouth is being used either through ignorance or malice. And, in either case, this will tend to reinforce your powers of heroic endurance. But when it is God that fights against one with the sword of his mouth—then it is another matter. It is one filled with awful elements. There is then absolutely no consolation to be derived from the answer of a good conscience. Neither can refuge be taken from its woundings in the thought that it proceeds from ignorance or malice. While writhing beneath its piercings there is the ever-present consciousness that it is deserved. The force of infinite knowledge, spotless holiness, and flawless justice is behind it. Where, then, can the soul go? To what refuge can it flee? It has to stand forth in a state of naked defenselessness, while suffering the awful piercings of the sword of the Almighty. In the face of this let me ask again: "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?"

And then, too, memory will undoubtedly be an active element contributing to the wretchedness

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of your future estate. There will be abiding by trooping forth from its chambers the procession of all the possibilities of the earth life by which, if improved, your now miserable lot could have been avoided. These will be individually pointing their fingers of condemnation at you and you will writhe unavailingly under the pain of their lash and sting.

Even in this life, with all its remedial possibilities and actualities, how much pain is engendered by memories which you would fain erase forever. In the effort to drown these men may resort to the wine cup or rush into the feverish pursuit of this life's fitful pleasures. And by such effort they not only fail to escape from these pursuing furies but are sowing the seeds for a larger harvest of accumulated sorrow in the coming years.

Here, there is the possibility of healing, of deliverance, so that even such memories may be changed into ministers of grace, chastened by their passage through manifold divine mercies and leading one into the satisfying joys found in the fruitful vales of humility.

But in the hereafter those remedial possibilities are no more. Instead of becoming messengers leading by the divine ordering to light and love and life, thy will be transformed into hideous and hissing serpents of retribution beneath whose

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woundings will be ceaselessly engendered darkness, hate and death.

"While memory watches o'er the sad review
Of joys that faded like the morning dew."

You will there have memories of multiplied opportunities, of available privileges, scattered freely along the pathway of your earthly life, which, if you had seized and used aright, would have led into paths of righteousness and peace.

So, also, on the other hand, memories of sins which might have been forsaken, of temptations which might have been overcome, of evil habits which might have been broken. Memories of invitations to choose the better part which passed unheeded and of warnings to turn aside from the paths of sin which were scorned. With what mighty significance will these now be clothed when they will be ceaselessly bearing down upon you amid the awful revealings of eternity.

Ah the everlasting regret over the joy, the pleasure, the blessedness which might have been, as contrasted with the pain that is. And the fearful agony of despair that will possess the spirit amid the dark shadows of its ever-deepening night of sorrow. Through a railroad bridge tender's neglect the "draw" was not in place when a passenger train was due. It made the fatal plunge.

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Many lives were lost. When the watchman was at last found he was hopelessly insane and kept ceaselessly exclaiming "Oh, if I only had," "Oh, if I only had." What an array of "only hads" and of "might have beens" will arise in memory to torment you in eternity!

And then to realize that you cannot banish them—that over all ways by which you would flee, the fact, if not the words, inscribed over the entrance to Dante's Inferno, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here" will drive you back to your awful companionship.

But in addition to the dread fellowship held with yourself, of what will be within you, there will also be that without you—the hateful associations of other lost souls and of devils.

You have perhaps known families from whose hearths love had largely taken its flight. What a wretched home life or the absence of it resulted. Homes they certainly were not if "home is where the heart is." And there is no love in hell. Love is of God. It is not of the devil. And everything there will be Satanic. You will hate every one and every one will hate you. Just imagine yourself abidingly in this life, in the company of the vilest and the wickedest social elements. Suppose your daily fellowships were with those who know not God but blaspheme his holy name, who take

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pleasure in desecrating his holy day, who violate all filial obligations, who are murderers, adulterers, thieves, liars, and full of all covetousness. How your soul would shrink and be filled with loathing and unutterable horror. Unless—unless—your soul at the same time would also be filled with an abounding, pitying, compassionate love for them. Then you might endure. But that is just the element, the presence and exercise of which will be utterly absent from all the relations of the lost with each other. "Hateful and hating one another." And moreover the most hateful exhibitions of the fallen nature of man here are tame as compared to those which will break forth when the visible and invisible restraints of this life are removed.

The outlook as to companionship in hell, both internal and external, is such as should cause your soul to shrink fearfully from those unspeakable horrors. You should cry for an assured deliverance therefrom and seek it with an earnestness that can know no abatement until you have a well grounded hope and assurance that your companionship in eternity will be that of light and love.

A profound and beautiful saying of Augustine's is "Lord, thou hast made us *for* thee, and our heart is disquieted till it resteth *in* thee." You have wandered from God. The fact and con-

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sciousness of his loving Fatherhood has ceased. But the need of it forever abides. And in view of the ever present need and the ever absent sense of sonship the heart is restless. There is an inner, a deep, abiding and unsatisfied soul yearning because of this orphanage. It has led and leads to the thousand and one vagaries, the world over and through all history, by which men would fain enter into rest.

"O where shall rest be found
Rest for the weary soul?"

This has been, is, and will be the mute or expressed cry of the orphaned hearts of men because of the loss of the divine fellowship through sin. To have your soul thus in its deepest needs, crying out for the living God, while at the same time you hate that God—ah me, what a warfare is this! And to have this heritage of need, of conscious orphanage, of hate, abide with you hopelessly and unalterably in a world of outer darkness; while you are aware that others are made glad by a Father's presence and unspeakably blessed through the ministries of his love, amid the unceasing splendors of eternity! This will be as a gnawing worm and a burning fire torturing your poor soul.

Have you not seen the heart of a child so

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wrought upon by a father's frown that the little one shrank beneath it and slunk away in sorrowful wretchedness? Its happiness came or went as the light of its father's countenance or the darkness thereof was lifted upon it.

And if this be so in the human how much more so in the divine relation. The abiding consciousness of the soul in the future that, for it, the face of God is forever darkened—ah, as one whipped with scorpions, will it slink, and be slinking away from God farther and still farther into the hopeless hidings of the darkness and the abysses. And all this while thinking of what "might have been," what "might have been."

Seek the world over for the vilest, the most repulsive, the most dangerous, the most hellish of social conditions. Then seek through all past time for the same. And when you conclude to award the crown somewhere and sometime for this bad eminence then reflect that even were the whole earth to be converted into a uniformity of badness like unto it—that even then it would be a comfortable, endurable and pleasant place in which to abide as compared to the condition to be realized in perdition.

Amid all the manifestations of the evil propensities of fallen men in this life the fact still remains that the Holy Spirit is everywhere present,

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exercising such restraint, the world over, that men are not what they would be but for this Presence. But as Louis XIV said regarding the social and political possibilities imminent upon his demise, "After me the deluge," so might you say regarding the condition of men upon the final withdrawal of the Holy Spirit—then the deluge. And a deluge compared to which the worst effects of sin ever realized here might be endured with comfortable complacency.

And, in addition to all these results and conditions, which are the natural attendants and issues of sin, there are intimations that there will be visited upon the lost, measures of positive penalty on account of it which will be a further mixture in the cup of misery which they are to drink.

Composed, as they still will be, of body, as well as soul, both of these elements of their personality will endure, each after its kind, the measure of this ministry of punitive pain which is its due.

This is not only suggested by all those figures referring in a concrete manner to punitive visitation but also by those which are not figurative.

As to the former, passages affirming that the wicked shall be "cast into fire," "beaten with stripes," "visited with torment," and that upon them he "shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest" may be taken as in-

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dicative of the visitation of positive suffering upon the wicked over and above the natural results of sin.

And, as to the latter, the Apostle's declaration that "indignation and wrath" are to be visited upon "every soul of man that doeth evil" is an intimation of the relation of divine justice to the wicked other than that of merely leaving them to the natural and inevitable issues of their sins.

And as to what may be involved for each in this positive visitation of God for sin—who can tell? What heart can endure? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" as a subject of wrath. In view of all the considerations of this chapter does not the import of the way of life grow exceedingly? As also of the question "what shall I do?"

CHAPTER VI.

PENAL RESULTS (INTENSITY).

In addition to the certainty and nature of future punishment the fact of its intensity is not to be overlooked. Whether you suffer much or little is surely an important element in the consideration of the question. You are especially interested in this because of certain advantages and privileges with which, above many, you are and have been favored. Should they pass unimproved they will make you peculiarly amenable, not only to future torment of the nature attempted to be described in the preceding chapter, but also characterized by an added intensity, because of and in proportion to, such favoring present conditions. That differences in this regard exist in the future world the Scriptures plainly affirm as, for example, the Lord's words in reference to the many or few stripes with which each will be visited.

And this difference in the future lot of lost souls is made to hinge on variations of unimproved advantages here. "That servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself

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neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

"But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

On this basis, while the condition of the heathen may be less desirable than yours, so far as this life is concerned, yet, as to that of the life to come, it will be much more preferable. If I were to pass hence alienated from God, a stranger to the way of life, it were better for me to do so from pagan rather than from Christian environments. Better to go as a heathen, encumbered with the blindness engendered by the idolatrous traditions of ages, than to go from amid surroundings illuminated by the Sun of Righteousness.

It is true none are excused, as the Apostle so vividly, forcibly, and conclusively shows in his epistle to the Romans, chapters 1, 2 and 3.

The Jew had his special advantages, as the Apostle admitted and enumerated in reply to the query of a representative of that nationality. And so have you. But those advantages did not prevent the Apostle from bringing him in as "guilty before God" with the rest of mankind.

The latter, without the law of God, as the Jew

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had and as you have it, was yet to perish without it for his sin. He was "without excuse" because of other sources of light than written law—bringing responsibility. So also will the Jew and you perish for your sin—being "without excuse"—in view of your possession not only of their sources of light but of others peculiar to yourselves.

The advantages of the Jew were "much every way, chiefly that because unto him were committed the oracles of God." And what has been committed unto you? The oracles of God as well as unto him. Nay, more, to you as not unto him, has been granted the incomparable light shed upon the problems of life, death and immortality from the pages of the New Testament Scriptures. If it could be said by Paul concerning the Old Testament writings, when addressing Timothy: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" how much more is this possible with you when, in addition to the old you also have the new in your hands. In them, in a peculiar manner "life and immortality" are brought to light.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic, like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none."

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Have you ever reflected, however cursorily, on the manifold ways in which the "goodness of God" which should "lead you to repentance" has distinguished you above others? They may be, and probably are, regarded by you as being so among the commonplaces of life, so among the matter-of-course things, that their inestimable preciousness has not taken serious hold upon your thought. But were you to be suddenly deprived of them and their whole influence in your life and in the social life about you to be rooted out and all become as though they had never been—what then?

The freedom of access which you may have to some things and the abundant fullness of their supply may deaden your sense as to their exceeding value but nevertheless the value remains.

As to the air, for example, which you may breathe so freely and the water which wells up so copiously for you. Received and used perchance by you thoughtlessly and thanklessly—but what if they were withheld for a little? What an awakening then to the unspeakable preciousness of otherwise common and mayhap little regarded blessings. Thus numberless facts, in a thoughtless way lightly esteemed, among which you have been "living and moving and having your being" from infancy onward, so that they have been con-

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sidered as among the natural order of things—a birthright inheritance, legitimate and inalienable—are yet to be attributed to God's providential goodness and gracious favor. Their withdrawal would startle you into the sorrowful and disappointed realization that gold and silver and precious stones had been strewn around you while yet you had been moving among them as though they were wood and hay and stubble. The fault is yours, not theirs. To awake to the vision of this—not in this life, but the next! Who can measure or declare the soul's awful sense of loss? Recall and ponder some of these facts.

The "oracles of God" pouring from the press by the million, to be obtained for a few cents, or, if need be, "without money and without price."

The Sabbath, the Church, the proclamation of the way of life by the heralds of salvation, so that the sound thereof is familiar.

Living illustrations of the presence and power of the life divine, in men and women in all the departments of social and business life.

Coming into contact with it in the home, in the school, not absent from the activities of the secular and flooding those of the sacred endeavors of men.

Pressing round about you when you awake, offering companionship through the day and com-

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ing in the quiet stillnesses of the night, proffering the benediction and peace of communion with the invisible and holy.

Wafted from the assemblies of the saints, as the songs of Zion are borne to you on the wings of the wind, intoned by the church bells, as they awaken the echoes among the valleys and hills and sound over the plains the call to worship God.

Beaming upon you from the eyes of happy childhood and following you wistfully and compassionately through all the garnered experiences of life's multiplied years.

Its gentle voice penetrating the noisy Babels of earth and not absent from the great solitudes and silences, round about you amid the glare and glitter of this garish world's activities and encompassing you when deep sleep falleth upon men and the solemn stillness of the starry immensities enters your soul.

Touching its garments amid the jostling crowds and meeting it on every street and avenue of a literature the breath of whose life depends upon the inspiration issuing from the life of the Holy One.

Memories of holy influences emanating from family altars, the stillness and heavenly quiet of Sabbath solemnities, the loving persuasiveness of example and precept, coming from hearts living

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near to God and bearing you up in intercession before the throne of grace.

Through all the life of the modern world in growing measure—its life private, public, domestic, social, municipal, national, educational, religious, its history, biography, science, art, philosophy—you have heard and are hearing voices declaring the supreme value of the invisible and eternal, and proclaiming that over all there is One whose Kingship is to be acknowledged and before whom the whole being should bow in reverential worship and loyal, loving service.

Now amid many, if not all, of these forces, making for righteousness, these influences which would woo you from sin's domain and draw you into the fellowships of the Kingdom of God, you have pursued the way of your earthly life without coming into the obedience of the truth, practically indifferent to the claims of God and the solemnities of the eternal world.

You finally pass hence from amid this galaxy of mercies, blessings, influences, this environment of light, all these gentle wooings of the things of the heavens. You have resisted them, closed your heart against them, made your choice of another service to their exclusion and with your back upon them you enter impenitently the world of the invisible, the eternal, the irrevocable. And sud-

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denly there is an awful awakening. An awakening to just estimates and to the comparative values of two kingdoms and worlds. An awakening accompanied with emotions—hard, hateful, impenitent, wrathful, despairing, because of the blindness, folly, insensibility, wickedness, which led you, amid all such golden opportunities and influences, to let them pass unheeded, while choosing darkness and death rather than light and life. You are filled with cursing. The intensity of the conscious contrast between what was and is and might have been, only fills your soul with a deeper sense of pain which will engulf you in unutterable wretchedness.

Sin will then appear as an abominable, hateful, damning and damnable thing. You will loathe, condemn and hate yourself, as consciously antagonistic to holiness and a holy God. You will curse the creator and every creature as well as yourself and yet you will realize and acknowledge the righteousness and justice of all that you are experiencing.

According to the light of the present will be the blackness of the darkness beyond. According to the heights of unimproved opportunity and privilege will be the depths of misery into which you will plunge over there. According to the multiplicity of loving influences which, in this life,

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would woo you to God, will be the intensity of your self-hatred and condemnation. According to the sweetness, purity and delightsomeness of your earthly life—made so for you because of the presence and operation in others of holy principles—will there be an intensity of painful recoil when confronted with a condition from which all sweetness, purity and delight have gone and there is an onrush of all that is hateful and horrible.

The comparative intensity, then, of the penal results awaiting you is an element in the case which should give you the most solemn and serious pause.

The Scriptures not only justify the worst fears which may be entertained as to this but set forth the awful possibilities in language that goes utterly beyond the present grasp of human apprehension.

If in reference to the joys awaiting the redeemed it is said "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," it is surely implied, by parity of reasoning, that what awaits those who hate God is also beyond all present human conception.

All the imagery borrowed from material things is indicative of this. The undying worm, the unquenchable fire, the smoke of their torment, weep-

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ing and wailing and gnashing of teeth, the raining upon the wicked of "snares, fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest,"—what can all such imagery mean but the infliction and suffering of the penal consequences of sin, by the impenitent, in appalling intensity. Holy men of God were speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, in reference to this, and not following cunningly devised fables.

CHAPTER VII.

PENAL RESULTS (DURATION).

On the subject of the penal results of your sins there still remains another element for your consideration. It is the most appalling of all. It is that of the duration of suffering in the world to come. In view of their certainty, nature and intensity do you inquire with earnest solicitude "what must I do?" There is surely enough and more than enough in those elements of the subject to elicit such an inquiry.

But when it comes to the question as to whether they are to be in the most absolute sense without limit as to duration—ah, that is an awful abyss, the possibility of which should arouse you to the most earnest and ceaseless inquiry and effort if peradventure there might be deliverance for you. Their certainty, nature and intensity possess elements from which you are to recoil and flee as from an evil, overtopping in its manifold terrors the utmost conceptions of the heart of man. What an amazement of fear should then seize you when, in addition to the foregoing, it should be borne in

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upon you that from the grasp of these awful horrors there was to be no release "for ever and ever." This is the question that now confronts you.

Appalling though the results of sin might be in the future as to their certainty, nature and intensity, yet were there a well-grounded hope that they would at length cease, even after the lapse of inconceivable periods, then there would be involved the possibility of measurably comfortable endurance. The "Pleasures of Hope" might be felt with alleviating power, even in hell, and your existence, in view of the eternity of blessedness to follow, would be a boon of unspeakable joy to you.

But if it is to be otherwise—if no ray of hope is to penetrate the "blackness of darkness" that will envelope you, if your wretched estate is to go on and on and on, "world without end," then your existence will be an unspeakable curse of which you would fain rid yourself, but cannot. Under such a condition "good were it for you if you had never been born."

The possibility of such a result is of too appalling a nature for you to face with nothing stronger to sustain you than a mere presumption that it may not be. To take any chances, to run any risk, where you have no well-grounded assurance

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that such an awful result will not be your portion, while at the same time it is possible for you to take such action here as will positively avert future evil, be it finite or infinite—surely that were the very madness of folly.

Seek the way of life at all hazards, be the penal consequences of your sins in the future what they may. On any supposition they are dreadful enough. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For our God is a consuming fire."

But, in the event of their being unending, there is overwhelming reason for you to bestir yourself, to ask, to seek, to knock, to rest not until the danger be overpast.

That this reason really does exist, that the worst fears you may entertain as to the duration of future punishment are well-grounded—I believe to be a part of God's merciful revelation to you. Thus would he lead you to inquire the way of life, to flee for refuge to the hope set before you. There is such a hope, one which you may have as an "anchor of your soul, both sure and steadfast."

For your belief in the unending consequences of sin in the future world and for action in harmony therewith consider the following:

It has been the faith of the church universal in

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all ages—both Jew and Gentile. And this unanimity of belief, based on the Scriptures, argues a righteous understanding of the revelation.

Moreover, this belief of the ancient church, instead of being opposed by our Lord and his Apostles was, on the other hand, confirmed most expressly. They set it forth much more clearly and explicitly than ever in terms which leave nothing to be desired. Take the following illustrative passages, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix, 43, 44. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv, 41, 46.)

The same word being used in both clauses it follows that what is true of one is also true of the other. If the blessedness of the righteousness is to continue for ever, as is here affirmed and as no one denies, then, just as surely, the punishment of the wicked will be similarly without end.

And the Apostolic teaching is in harmony with the foregoing express declarations of our Lord. The wicked are to be "punished with everlasting

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destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. 1:9.)

Jude speaks of those for whom is "reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" and John, in Revelation, of those "the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night."

These will suffice for our purpose here.

What a prospect is this! Before such an outlook, in the presence of these solemnities of the eternal world, these partial revelations of a sinner's destiny—the certainty, nature, intensity and limitless duration of which are confirmed of God—surely the instinctive cry of your soul can but be "What must I do?" In their presence no wonder the prophet cried "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Periods of duration which, to our present thought, appear overwhelming in their vastness, will dwindle into insignificance by comparison with what is still beyond.

You may be impressed with the greatness of historic time. How far off, hazy, shadowy, indistinct, seem the men and things of the early Egyptian dynasties, of the movements on the plain of Shinar in the times of the dispersion, of that old

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world before the deluge, of the time when father Adam was still in Paradise keeping and dressing it. We speak of pre-historic times as of those so far removed that our notions of them bear the vagueness characteristic of our grasp of numbers indicated by seven or more figures.

To be in pain and sorrow at the dawn of historic time and to be still enduring them might be deemed a fearful destiny.

But what of this as compared to the lapse of geologic time? What is the six thousand years usually assigned to human history when you come to reckon years by the hundred million—as geologists affirm must be done to account for the change of our earth from the original chaos to its present order?

To be in torment at the dawn of creation and to continue therein through those abysmal geologic periods up to the introduction of man—unspeakably deplorable!

Astronomic distances are so vast that you could remove from the solar system until the whole diameter of the earth's orbit would be hidden behind a thread which itself would be invisible a few feet away. The earth's orbit would shrink into comparative nothingness—be as though it were not. And so of time. Viewing historic time from the dawn of geologic time the former might

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shrivel or even vanish altogether and be as though it were not.

But so also would geologic time itself shrivel and ultimately vanish when viewed from some point in the immensities of prior duration. And not alone of anterior duration but as well of that which is yet to be. Geologic time will recede until it be a mere speck on the unfolding scroll of eternity and ultimately disappear.

But having vanished you are still on the threshold of eternity. This is forever before you.

Take the following impressive illustration of time immensities which I recall having seen somewhere. Suppose one grain or particle of this world were borne away at the present moment. Then a thousand years elapse and, at the end of that period, another grain is removed. Suppose this process were to continue—one grain removed each thousand years—until finally this world ceased to be. Can you grasp the vastness of such a duration?

During its slow process and throughout its inconceivable extension, sin's penal results will be endured.

But even at the close thereof you will be but at the dawn of eternity. It will be forever ahead of you. Such periods multiplied by tens of thousands of others like them will vanish, be en-

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gulfed in the past, be as though they were not, while through them all and on, on, on, forever on, the wretchedness of your sinful estate will be a present, an ever abiding reality.

"I admit the awful nature of the conclusion, that the punishment of the future world is to have no end. I do most fully admit, that it is indeed 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' But what if I should doubt or deny it? Can this have any influence on that eternal Judge, who will pronounce my final sentence? None. Can my denial of what he has said, or my refusal to explain it in analogy with all his other declarations relative to things of the future world, or my efforts to fritter away the meaning of his declarations—can all this avail me, when I stand an unembodied, naked, helpless spirit before his searching eye and the tribunal of his almighty power? Oh, the dreadful thought! What if I deceive myself, and cry out, '*peace! peace!*' while my God saith, 'There is no peace to the wicked?' Will this repeal his law, altar its meaning, or frustrate its penalty? It is indeed a fearful hazard for men to cast themselves for safety on such a desperate wreck as this!"

"I must hold to the endless punishment of the wicked, or give up the endless happiness of the righteous. And if the hope of this must be aban-

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doned, then may we well ask, what the gospel has revealed that is worth our knowing, or of what value is the existence which the Creator has given us."

"The result seems to me to be plain, and philologically and exegetically certain. It is this: either the declarations of the Scriptures do not establish the facts, that God and his glory and praise and happiness are endless, nor that the happiness of the righteous in a future world is endless; or else they establish the fact, that the punishment of the wicked is endless. The whole stand or fall together. There can from the very nature of antithesis, be no room for rational doubt here, in what manner we should interpret the declarations of the sacred writers. WE MUST EITHER ADMIT THE ENDLESS MISERY OF HELL, OR GIVE UP THE ENDLESS HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN."

CHAPTER VIII.

FAITH.

In view of all the foregoing truth you do well to inquire "What must I do?" But it is now a question, not so much of what you must do as of what God has done and will do for you. There lies your hope. Apart from that you can only despairingly cry "undone, undone, God be merciful to me a sinner." But in the latter part of that cry there is that which reaches the heart of God. It will "enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

It will not be uttered in vain. It will be well pleasing unto God and your extremity will be his opportunity. He will answer your cry by the visitation of his mercy upon you according to the riches of his grace. If you are to enter into life it must be by ceasing to look to self, by casting away the confidence of all hope in the flesh and fixing your look, your hope, your confidence, upon that great and merciful and sympathetic high priest who was in all points tempted as you. Your

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only hope is in that Sinless One who was "made to be sin for you," and who can and will "save you to the uttermost." For the excellency of the vision of Christ and the experience of the mercy of God toward you in and through Him, you will "count all things but loss." To "win Christ and be found in him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"—for that you must stand ready to "suffer the loss of all things."

Well, if as a sinner, a convicted and helpless sinner, you are a docile, earnest and sincere seeker, you will find Christ as your Lord and Saviour, for he is seeking you. He came from heaven for the express purpose of seeking and saving the lost—of whom you are one.

And the very fact that you now realize your condemnation as a sinner and are moved to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner" is a token from God that the merciful and compassionate Redeemer is finding you.

For know assuredly that God does not delight in the death of the sinner. On the contrary his love for lost men is such that he "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

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"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

"I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

In view of all these assurances, then, if you, as a sinner, perish, it will be clearly your own fault and not that of the merciful God and Saviour. "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself but in me is thine help."

Because of the revelations of the antecedent chapters as to the unspeakable importance of the matter, the awful nature of sin; your present estate of guilt, condemnation and pollution; the fearful looking for a future of certain, intense and irremediable woe—well may you sincerely, earnestly, solemnly ask, in the presence of such issues of destiny, "What must I do?" In such a case you need One who is mighty to save. And, behold, he cometh. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in

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the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Let your whole soul turn trustfully to him and you will realize the salvation of God.

In the confusion, the terror, the amazement of soul, the deep distress which so suddenly seized the sin-convicted soul of the Philippian jailer and wrested from him the cry "What must I do to be saved?" the Apostle's all sufficient reply was "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

This is God's answer to your soul's need. And you must have absolute confidence in God's word—in what he tells you regarding the way of life.

As a child your faith in the word of your parents was unhesitating and full. And is God any less worthy?

When you find out from experience and God's word what you are and what you need and what God has done to meet that need—then in the full assurance of God's truth and faithfulness, let your soul rest therein. "According to your faith be it unto you." "Yea let God be true and every man," yourself included, "a liar."

So no matter what anything in you may say, or what others may say or what Satan may suggest—you are to have faith in God, as against all creation. "Men verily swear by the greater; and

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an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath:" "That by two immutable things"—that is God's word and, in addition to that, his oath—"in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

Well, you are already brought into the knowledge of your lost estate through sin. The declarations of God's word, as to the consequences thereof have so taken hold of you and you so believe them that your soul is filled with disquiet. Peace and rest have fled. Your need then is to also believe the declarations of God in reference to the way of life and peace. So believing you shall find rest unto your soul and the "peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." And you will be thus blessed with the peace of God and your heart and mind kept—not from anything in you moving God thereto, nor yet from any mere whim or weakness of compassion on the part of God toward you. That were an uncertain, ca-

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precious foundation on which to build your hope of abiding rest and peace. On the contrary it is in all things "well ordered and sure" because the integrity of the justice of God has been preserved in the atoning life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. God can now be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Without the work of Christ he could not. He could not righteously exercise his mercy toward you, and exclusion from his presence, with its consequent wretchedness, would justly be your portion, because of your sins. But now the case is different. When you come asking for his "favor in which is life"—because of the sacrificially surrendered life of His Son for you—you are asking that which both his justice and his mercy are eagerly pleading in your behalf. You have a right to ask for it and a right to expect it. Coming and asking in the name and for the sake of his dear Son you will not be disappointed. He delighteth in mercy and the way is opened up in and through Christ for its abundant exercise. He has covenanted to exercise it toward you and on his sure word you may rest your soul. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

And now what saith the Scripture to you?
"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord

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shall be saved." "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Here is the assurance of God coming to you as an individual—and coming to you more definitely than if he had spoken your name.

The saintly Richard Baxter it was who said that he had a better ground of assurance for the extension of the divine mercy to himself personally in the use of the word "whosoever" than if the name Richard Baxter were used. For were it said that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that Richard Baxter believing in him should not perish but have everlasting life," what assurance, said he, could he have that he was the person meant. It might be some other one of the many Richard Baxters in the world for whom it was intended. And thus his peace would have no guaranteed stability. But when God says "whosoever," I know I am one of them and that the glad tidings are for me without any peradventure.

God's answer to your need as a sinner is Jesus. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

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And what is your answer to this provision of God? In penitent humility and yet with deep spiritual joy will not your heart eagerly say, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Here you are in the presence of faith—by which you receive Jesus and confide in him as your all-sufficient Saviour from sin, in all its aspects, and by which you are to be an overcomer in the Christian warfare. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith." This is the gateway of life. "By grace are you saved through faith."

Now let us look at the gateway with care so that you may be fully assured. There are faiths and faiths, each with their appropriate objects and results. But there is only one which brings to you, as a needy sinner, the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ your Lord.

Some have right objects and beneficent results but, nevertheless, having no reference to things eternal, do not therefore involve salvation from sin. Others have right objects without good results.

And still others may have wrong objects and detrimental results. You are now specially interested in the one which has exclusive reference to eternal life.

And we sometimes are helped to a better knowl-

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edge of a matter, to the finding out of what it is—by learning what it is not.

The faith which evil men have in themselves and others, as they may take counsel together for the furtherance of unrighteousness—has it not in numberless instances been brought to naught of God? “He made a pit and digged it and is fallen into the ditch which he made.”

“His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing upon his own pate.” Faith? Yes. But wrong objects and disastrous results, so far as the wicked are concerned. The Lord “makes the wrath of man to praise him,” but little thanks to them. Many others, besides Absalom, have faith to engage in unholy enterprises only to find themselves execrated of men and outcasts from God.

And as an example of faith having a right object without issuing beneficently, take the case of devils. St. James informs us that “the devils believe and tremble.” Their faith has undoubtedly a reference to God and Christ and his word and the great facts of his kingdom, while yet resulting in the tormenting tremblings of fear.

And all faiths, whatever their differences as to objects and results, have something in common.

There is a conviction of the truth of things and this rests on testimony of one kind and another.

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But the faith that saves has an *Object* and *Testimony* and *Result* altogether exceptional.

As to faiths with right objects and results while yet not opening up to you the gateway of life—there are many such. There, for example, is faith in the contents of the Scriptures. You read the histories, biographies, the record of varied and singular institutions found therein and, on the ample testimony by which the truth of these matters is guaranteed, you yield your assent, you believe, you have faith in them, unhesitating and intelligent. But all this may be, you may enter this gateway without finding the new life of which you are sorely in need.

There also is faith in men and women in reference to the manifold affairs of the life that now is. And this faith bears a stronger resemblance to the one which you now especially need than do some of the others. There is an element of trust in other *persons* about it which brings social, commercial or other rest into the soul, as the case may be. Were this element of personal trust absent, domestic, social and other unrest would result. This allies it closely in character to what you need, only that saving faith has to do with a different Person and with spiritual and eternal results.

The social, commercial, educational, and polit-

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ical life of mankind would utterly collapse were it not for the mutual faith which leads us out trustfully in all our relations with each other. Conviction that thus and thus it will be, on the authority of such and such testimony, maintains social order and commercial enterprise and the many interchanges in the complex relations of men, when otherwise there would be universal distrust, repulsion and chaotic ruin.

But the gateway of the life that you need and seek is not there.

So also may you and must you have faith in yourself in reference to your life's obligations and its possible achievements. With it you may remove mountains when, without it, mole hills may paralyze you.

And you have faith in the overruling providence of God as to the triumph of righteousness in the earth.

Faith is a great moving, conquering element in the affairs of mankind. Without it the black pall of a dismal, fearful, despairing and nerveless inertia would settle down upon the families of men and life would not be worth living.

And yet all these faiths may be in healthy exercise and beneficently fruitful, while yet, as you enter their gateways, you do not find that which satisfies the deepest needs of your heart. Your

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heart is crying out for the living God—for pardon of sin, for an assuring peace in your own soul and between you and God, for eternal life—but there you meet them not.

“O where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul?
’Twere vain the ocean’s depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole.”

What you need is the vision of the Lord Jesus. “Sir, we would see Jesus.” “Behold the Lamb of God.” You have the vision of yourself. Beholding what manner of person you are you have been led, as a convicted sinner, to cry out, “What must I do?” Guilty, condemned, polluted, you would fain be delivered.

But you look this way and that and there is no helper. Ah, what you need now is the seeing of the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” You must see him for yourself and your eyes must behold him for yourself and not for another. “Ye believe in God believe also in me.” You do not question the truth of God or his word.

Then you are privileged and it is your duty to believe the testimony of God concerning his Son in relation to your need as a sinner.

You behold him in the sinless and suffering record of his life. And you also see him upon the

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cross. You are moved as you see him, on your account, "enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself" during those marvelous years of his earthly ministry.

And more especially as you follow him into Gethsemane, with its bloody sweat, and to Calvary with its mysterious agonies because of sin and the forsaking of God. In Gethsemane, why the agony, the falling on the ground, the strong crying and tears, the bloody sweat? God's word assures you that it was because "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." That was it which was crushing him to the earth—the load of a world's sin.

On the cross why the lamentable cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—revealing a mysterious depth of suffering beyond human ken? Was it not because "God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him?" "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." And why was it that he was thus made sin, that he bore the griefs of men and carried their sorrows, that he was wounded for their transgression and bruised for their iniquities, that their iniquities were laid upon him and that he agonized with "strong crying and

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tears," that Gethsemane had to be entered and Calvary endured? Ah, you say, it was that sinners might go free. He was anointed by the Spirit to so do and endure that the broken-hearted might be healed, that the captives might be delivered, that the blind might receive their sight, that the burdened and bruised might be set at liberty. Very true. And are you not among that number? That is the vision of Jesus which you need. That is the faith which it is your duty and privilege to exercise. You will be sinning against God, against Jesus, against the Spirit, against your own soul, if you do not exercise it.

You are not to believe simply that the iniquities of others were laid upon him, that God made him to be sin for them, and that by all his stripes they are to be healed.

What you are to believe is that *your* iniquities were laid upon him, that he was made to be sin for *you*, and that *you* are to be healed by his stripes. You are to believe that it is your privilege and that you will greatly honor the Lord Jesus and please God, in believing that the grief and the sorrow and the suffering that you may be enduring because of your sins, as you stand convicted in their presence—that Jesus carried them all in order to free you from the burden. There is no reason why *you* should be hugging and car-

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rying them when *he* bore them for you. You are to believe that all the sins, the sorrows, the griefs, the iniquities, of you A. B. were laid upon him, that he bore them on the accursed tree and was made a curse that you might inherit a blessing, that he tasted death in order that you might taste the gladness and joy of life—even life forevermore. God asks *you*, A. B. to so believe. Dost thou so believe? "According to your faith be it unto you." "Yea, let God be true and every man," yourself included, "a liar." In the face of every element of doubt that would becloud your vision of the Lamb slain for *you*, cast yourself down before him, saying, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" and your spiritual morning will dawn. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." Such a vision of Christ for oneself and not for another or others is variously named. It is "looking to Jesus."

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One
There is life at this moment for thee
Then look, sinner look unto him and be saved
Unto him was nailed to the tree."

On the strength of your knowledge of what he is and what he has done for *you*, your whole soul goes out toward him trustfully, lovingly, gratefully as your God and Saviour. You commit

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yourself unto him as unto a faithful Creator, you confide, believe, have faith in him. All of these terms are expressive of the attitude of your soul toward him, as you have a vision of him as the One who loved and loves *you*, gave himself for *you* and bore *your* sins in his own body on the tree.

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

“But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

“My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

“My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on th’ accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.

“Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing his dying love.”

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You see Jesus and are led by the Spirit to believe him adequate to all your needs as a sinner. You flee to him as the rock of your refuge and trust your soul to his keeping both now and forever. You receive and rest upon him alone for your salvation. And this trust of your soul in him, this resting upon him, brings rest in your soul. There is the peace of God and the joy of salvation in it.

The knowledge of yourself and the vision of Christ together with the experience of the surpassing favors enjoyed in the new relation cannot, of course, but be attended with a degree of emotion, of feeling.

As in repentance there will be sorrow for sin, however much or little, so in the experience of faith, or trust in your Saviour, there will be a measure of joy and gladness. Love is an emotion, a feeling, and it would be a contradiction in terms to affirm that you could be a true Christian believer, beholding Jesus as the One "who loved you and gave himself for you," and at the same time have no feeling—that is no love. How, in that event could you truly sing

"Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly
While the billows near me roll
While the tempest still is high;

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"Hide me, O my Saviour! hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Save into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last!"

It may not be the same in degree in one as in another while yet this variation does not argue the absence of a true beholding and trust. Differences of natural temperament as well as differences in the intensity of the vision of sin and the Saviour as between one soul and another will account for variations of emotion or feeling.

But, as in repentance the essential element is the turning away from sin unto God, so here it is not the feeling, much or little, which is essential, but the trustful resting on and in Him as your all-sufficient refuge and redeemer.

Antecedent to this saving faith, in which there is and must be this personal element—being between you as a person and Christ as a person—there is exercised on your part faith in the truth of the word of God concerning Christ. This implies, of course, some knowledge on your part of the great facts of redemption—this must be present before faith can be intelligently exercised. But that knowledge need not be very extensive. It is not such that the learned of earth are alone capable of acquiring and using it but it is intended of God for and it is adapted to the capacities of all

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who must give account. It is for all ages and classes and conditions of men who are capable of appreciating God's love in Christ and the why of its exercise.

Some pass rapidly through all the stages of conviction, of the acquisition of needed knowledge regarding the way of life and the exercise of a living and loving faith in Christ, while with others it may be more protracted. For example, the Philippian jailor was suddenly convicted and led to exclaim "What must I do?" Briefly Paul instructed him in the word of God and then "he set meat before them and rejoiced believing in God with all his house." There was here a rapid transition from the darkness of heathenism to the "marvelous light" of the Gospel.

In other instances, the time elapsing from the beginning of a true conviction of sin until the soul is made to realize the joy of a saving faith, may be somewhat prolonged, as in the case of Luther, Bunyan, and many others of God's people.

But surely God is not chargeable with this. The fault is ours. "O fools and slow of heart to believe the Scriptures." We too often stumble at the simplicity of the truth, like Naaman in reference to Elisha's proposed method for curing his leprosy. The fault was in Naaman, not in Elisha. Too often is there a protracted stay in

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the darkness of sin and under the bondage of the law, when the freedom of Christ might be gladdening the heart, just because "to the Jew these things are a stumbling block and to the Greek they are foolishness."

The sooner a soul divests itself of the supposed sufficiency or superiority of its own righteousness or its own knowledge and casts itself down at the Cross, "putting no confidence in the flesh," the sooner will Christ be made unto it "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

And now having come into living union with Christ through faith, so, through faith will you abide. The faith which you exercise at the beginning, and by which you consciously enter into life the same is it by which you grow up into him all through the earthly journey.

"The faith by which a believer lives, is not specifically different in its nature or object from the faith required of every man in order to his salvation. The life of faith is only the continued repetition, it may be with ever increasing strength and clearness, of those exercises by which we first received Christ, in all his fullness and in all his offices, as our God and Saviour."

Being by your faith united to Christ you will, of course, participate in his life as the branches

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partake of the life of the vine. This will be one of its effects upon your being, in your own person, while its effects upon your external relation to God is that you now occupy the position of one who is "justified by the faith of Christ." You are no longer under condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." But we will leave this for the present, reserving its fuller consideration for the chapter on justification.

CHAPTER IX.

REPENTANCE.

You have had a revelation made to you of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. In your helpless and hopeless condition, as a sinner before God, you have fled for refuge to Christ, believing in him, trusting him and rejoicing in him as your all-sufficient Friend and Helper. You have had a saving apprehension of God's mercy in Christ toward you.

But along with this beholding of the Lord Jesus there has also been revealed to you the true nature of sin, and you have been conscious of a certain feeling in relation to it, as also of a certain attitude, purpose and effort. To all of these varied aspects of your soul's relation to sin the term repentance has been applied. It is a saving and gracious effect wrought in you by the Holy Spirit, whereby your emotions, estimates and efforts, as to sin, are changed.

You must link it in closest association with your faith. Wherever the one is the other must of necessity already exist or inevitably follow. You

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cannot have the saving grace of faith without repentance, nor the saving grace of repentance without faith. God hath joined them together and no man can separate. To attempt to do so would lead either to self-righteousness or licentiousness.

For the confirmation of your faith, the comfort of your hope and the deepening of the channels of your love to God it may be well for you now to critically examine yourself in relation to this grace. It will confirm yourself and enable you to confirm others by the ability to give a "reason for the hope that is in you." If the appropriate evidences are present it will give you increased boldness in the faith and the enlarged joy of the "full assurance" thereof.

The time for this was not when you were brought to a consciousness of being in the horrible pit and sinking in the miry clay of sin. When in such a state it ill becomes one to spend time in discussion over the why and wherefore of things, when the hand of God in Christ is reaching down to help and the voice of Divine mercy is calling to the sinking one to lay hold of the hope set before him. The immediate duty and privilege is to utilize the means of present deliverance.

But when freed from the present and pressing danger—then the disposition to analyze the situation may be pursued leisurely and with profit to

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oneself and others. Indeed to revert to it will form an abiding source for the quickening of reverential gratitude to God for his saving mercy.

You were brought to realize the fact of sin's dominion over you and that you were under the condemnation of God's holy law. Conscience—God's vicegerent in the soul—accused you and said *Amen* to the law's condemnation. "The law entered that the offence might abound." Your state—antecedently to the beholding of Christ as your sin-bearer—was an unhappy one. Its duration may be brief or quite protracted. The unhappiness may be intense, or not, according to the vivid nature of the revelation made to the soul of the character of sin and its deservings. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." To some, the sense of sin, the knowledge of law, the voice of conscience, the apprehension of justice, is such that, without the vision of Christ and the apprehension of God's mercy in him, they are driven to despair. They try to hide themselves from God. They seek death. They go to their own place. They are represented as saying at last to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." This is conviction of sin. Without the revelation and believing appropriation of God's mercy, as shining in the face of

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Jesus Christ, it is despair and death. But, with it, there is life, joy, peace; salvation, glory, honor, immortality. It is the passing away of the clouds and darkness and the oncoming of the "marvelous light"—the clear shining after rain.

Conviction is common to the sinner who does not savingly behold God in the face of Jesus Christ and to the one who does. But from there is the parting of their ways. In that state they both may cry out, under the pressure of sin and law and conscience, "O wretched man that I am." But you look again and, lo, one still faces the way of death while the other has his face toward the City of refuge. One perhaps emerges from the unhappiness of this troubled estate by becoming indifferent, callous, hardened. The conflict of spirit is over and to that extent there is the happiness realized by the absence of a house divided against itself, even if it be but "the triumphing of the wicked which is short and the joy of the hypocrite which is but for a moment." The other also emerges from this inner conflict into the joy of an undivided heart, but it is a heart "united to fear the name" of Him who has become his God and Saviour and whom he would love with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. His face is toward the sun rising.

In this troubled condition of spirit, in view of

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sin and law and conscience and the judgment to come, God was speaking roughly to your soul. But why? You remember the relationship of Joseph to his brethren, while governor of Egypt. They had been guilty of heinous conduct toward him. He now would fain bring them to truly realize this, to work repentance in them, in view of their offences, to discover to themselves what manner of men they were, to work in them a renunciation of evil and turn their hearts toward that which is good and right. For the determination of this how did he at first treat them? "And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange with them, and spake roughly unto them." Or, as it is also rendered, "Hard things with them." But did he delight in this? Most assuredly not. While doing so and thus giving his brethren the impression that he was unfriendly to them, all the while his heart was yearning over them in loving solicitude for their welfare. So much so that he had to leave the room and allow his surcharged heart to overflow in tears of affectionate devotion. Judgment was his strange work and aspect toward them but he delighted in mercy. He was longing for the time to fully come when he could make a revelation of himself to them and embrace them in the arms of his loyal and loving care.

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This time came, but not before they were led—by the voice of conscience and the knowledge of sin through the workings of God's law—to cry out "We are verily guilty concerning our brother ; in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us." They are troubled because of their sins. This is well. But the joys of fellowship are better than separations and restraints, even though they be those of penitent souls. So he makes himself known and there are such glad communings that "the fame thereof is heard in Pharaoh's house."

So God did not willingly afflict nor grieve you but the rather that you might be the better prepared to profit by the revelation of his love and mercy in Christ. "The law was your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ." Let your heart then be filled with thanksgiving that he brought you, for he sometimes visits souls in great severity without their being brought nigh, but the rather driven into greater hardness and impenitency of heart.

Conviction of sin comes to two souls but to the one it is a savor of life while to the other it is a savor of death. To the one it comes like the melting power of the sun upon the wax, but to the

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other it is the hardening influence of the sun upon the clay.

Both are in sorrow and troubled because of sin. Repentance is present in each, but one is unto life, the other unto death.

The true, views sin not only in its relation to the sinner as to the present and prospective consequences thereof, but also as to its own unholy and repugnant nature and of its antagonism to the nature of a holy God. The false, views sin chiefly in relation to the consequences to be endured because of it. The true cries out, "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from my sins—from this body of death?" The false cries, "How shall I escape"—not from my sins, but simply "from the results of my sins?" The criminal who is detected, arrested, convicted, may grieve because of such results of his offences. But only let them be removed and the pathways of sin are again trodden from choice. If he be kept therefrom to any extent the restraint is from without, not from within. But to the one who turns from evil, because it is evil, and hateful to his own soul and to God, and not simply in view of the present risk of detrimental effects, to such an one the restraint is from within instead of without. He is a law unto himself. "The law was not made for a righteous man." David sins

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—it is brought home to him. He prostrates himself before God in penitent abasement, crying out, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Such a vision of sin is his that he abhors it, and himself because of it, and cries out for the cleansing ministry of the Spirit. Sin is the great evil from which he would be delivered and fitness for the fellowship of the Holy One the boon which his soul craved.

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.”

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

And when to the patriarch Job was revealed the vision of God, he exclaimed, “Now mine eye seeth thee—wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

And Isaiah, after the vision of the Lord, exclaimed, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

To such souls it is the presence of sin that

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troubles them and from which they would fain be delivered. And so the response comes to Isaiah, as the cleansing efficacy of the fire of God is applied to him, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

But Judas, and others like him, sin, and there is an horror of great darkness and despair, as conscience and the law of God grasps them mightily. From their awful workings they hasten "to their own place," if peradventure they may hide themselves from "him who sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb," and blot out in the silence of the grave the vision and voice of their fearful inner accusers. Vain hope. It shall perish.

In varying measures of intensity then, the true repentance, which is unto life, will turn away from sin unto God, while the false, which is unto death, has no quarrel with sin, as such, except in so far as its results are troublesome.

To you, amid your troubled thoughts and emotions because of your sins and your sense of condemnation on their account, there was revealed the Lamb of God taking away sins, "bearing them in his own body on the tree." Not only did you see and believe him to be a sin-bearer in general and for others, but you were led by the Spirit to

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behold him as bearing your sins and "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against you, which was contrary to you, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." In this faith you exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." You were led to rejoice in his salvation and gladdened by the blessed rest and peace coming into your soul after the antecedent fears. You knew and felt that "his banner over you was love." And what effect did all this have upon your vision and feeling and purpose and endeavor in regard to sin? Did not Gethsemane and Calvary,—in their awful revelations of what your Saviour endured for you—did they not reveal sin as a thing hateful and to be hated? And in the light of the cross and your new found liberty from the fear and the bondage which had oppressed you, was there not aroused in your soul a feeling of personal antagonism to sin, as that which your now regenerated nature instinctively felt to be, always and everywhere, your implacable enemy? Because of sin you endured much and your Lord endured more. Because of what you saw in him and out of a grateful recognition of what he did for you, your soul went out toward him in love. And, in view of all, you became, like him, a "lover of righteousness" and a "hater of iniquity" and he "anointed you with the oil of gladness." Through

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the law and its revelations to you of yourself and your deservings and through the agonizing Christ, who was "made to be sin for you," you came to see sin as "exceeding sinful" and your heart in reference to it was moved to sorrow and hate and repudiation. You turned away from it to God. And that was the essential part of your repentance. To you, on the one hand, there was granted a vision of sin, of law, of condemnation and the experience of an accusing conscience. On the other there was the vision of the crucified One and the experience of God's saving mercy in and through Him. But, to any one capable of emotion, all this could not be without there being present, in some measure,—in proportion to the experience and the revelation—the feeling of grief and sorrow and hatred because of sin as well as of love because of a Saviour and his salvation.

But while the feeling, the emotion, is well pleasing as an index of the soul's attitude, yet it is the turning away from sin unto God which is abidingly profitable and pleasing. Given any amount of emotion without the turning away and what doth it profit? But given the turning away from sin unto God, whether there be much emotion or little,—and the goal is heaven.

The sorrow for sin, attendant upon true repentance, is not that which God would have for-

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ever present as a thing to be desired. It is to be transient as sin—God would have us neither to sorrow nor to be sinful, but to be holy and full of rejoicing. God does not delight in sorrow for its own sake and he will not permit its presence in heaven. If he does so here and is pleased to behold it, as the token of the new life of his repentant children, yet he will be more pleased to have them enjoy the fellowship and the fullness of the abounding holiness, where sin shall never be witnessed.

And so Paul, giving expression to the divine mind in II Cor. vii:9, says, "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a Godly manner." It was not the sorrow that they were to rest in, neither was that it which was delighting the soul of the Apostle or finally pleasing to God, but rather the turning from sin unto holiness, of which the sorrow was but an accompaniment and an index. What pleased God and what "approved them to be clear in this matter" was the "carefulness," the "clearing," the "indignation," the "fear," the "vehement desire," the "zeal," the "revenge," as to sin and all its manifestations.

And not only were you characterized by this turning from sin unto God, when, at the beginning, Christ was revealed to you as your sin

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bearer and you trustfully accepted him as such. When you first consciously became a Christian, the turning from sin, then present, with all its attendant emotion, however much or little,—that, properly enough, is regarded as the great act of repentance which eclipses all others.

But you are not to regard it as the only one. That accompanied the great initial act of obedience when a rebel was changed into a loyal subject of the King of glory. But wherever and whenever sin is present there will be occasion for the exercise of repentance. And that will be during the continuance of your whole mortal life. If you need daily to pray, as you certainly do, “forgive my debts as I forgive my debtors,” there is implied the daily presence and activity of sin, and thereby the daily need of turning away therefrom unto God “with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience.” And this will continue until you are privileged to sing, as an expression of actual realization, “Unto him that loved me and washed me from my sins in his own blood.

And hath made me a King and a priest unto God and his Father: to him ever be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

While you are now “complete in him,” so far as your standing before God is concerned, and “Christ has become to you the end of the law for

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righteousness;" while to you, being "in Christ Jesus," "there is therefore now no condemnation" and naught can "separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord," yet the actual, full and final elimination of sin from your nature, has not been accomplished. While this remains, "repentance toward God and faith toward your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," will be a daily need of your spiritual life and warfare. And indeed, with your increasing vision of the beauty of holiness, your growing knowledge of God and yourself, your deepening love for him who is becoming more and more to you the "chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely," there will be correspondingly present a repentant turning away from sin as an unholy, hateful and corrupt thing, displeasing to you and to God.

You will also realize more and more deeply, that all sin, in the last analysis, is against God. While it is true that you may sin against your own soul and offend against the generation of the righteous it yet remains that all sin at last strikes at God. This the Scriptures plainly affirm. Joseph, when tempted to a sin, the evil results of which would be against himself and others, exclaimed, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

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And David, after so heinously sinning against others and himself, when led by the Spirit to true repentance, was also taught to say, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

The same fact may be righteously inferred from the teaching of the Apostle as to the glorifying of God by all the manifested life of a renewed soul. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Your life, then, in all its details, while in the first place it may be truly *for yourself*, yet, in the final summing up, is affirmed to be *for God*.

Is it not therefore, truly implied, on the other hand, that all in your life, which, in the first place, is to be regarded as against yourself or others, is yet, in the final estimate, to be adjudged as against God? So that by direct affirmation as well as by parity of reasoning, the Scriptures teach that all sin is to be regarded as committed against God. This recognition will increase your sense of the solemnity as well as dignity of your life, seeing that all its multitudinous expressions are either for or against God. It will give added earnestness, intensity, fervor, reverence to your daily repentances, as well as crown your daily righteousness with the brightness of the glory land. And that, too, however apparently trivial

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they may be, as they ripple playfully, innocently, joyously on the surface of your daily, honest life, or go deeper into its currents in the more serious experiences.

“A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.”

It is not necessary, surely, to remind you that repentance is not to be confounded with penance.

Everything in the way of suffering for sin by way of atonement therefor so that it might be blotted out and your soul enter into the gladness of conscious deliverance—that was endured for you by your Saviour when he voluntarily “bore your sins in his own body.” He suffered for your sin so that you might not. Then why do penance? He did that. And so far as the sins are concerned which you daily commit as a child of God, after you have experienced his gracious mercy, he himself will see to the meting out to you of all needed chastisement for your good. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

It is not at all necessary, then, for you to take yourself in hand and determine the suffering you are to endure, by way of penance, for this, that,

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or the other sin. It is for you to turn from the *sin*, with whatever emotions of hate and love, as to sin and holiness, may be wrought in you by the word and Spirit.

And as to the punishment therefor, which may, or ought to follow, your Father will see to that much more unerringly, as to kind and degree, than you possibly can.

“Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know;
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and thou alone.”

He will be the Alpha and the Omega of your salvation, both as to all suffering for the original cancellation of your guilt, as well as to all chastisement administered in love, on account of any waywardness of yours as his child by the adoption of grace.

In reference to all suffering for sin, whether as to that committed before or after your “acceptance in the beloved,” it is for your good and his glory to leave all that with the Lord rather than take it in your own hands. Repudiating your own as well as others decisions in relation to what you might be adjudged to endure by way of penance for sin, it is your privilege and duty to exclaim with David: “Let me now fall into the hand of

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the Lord: for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man."

As to crime and its punishment, that is another and different question. Thus, in the presence, on the one hand, of your sins, and, on the other, of the greatness of the undeserved love of your Lord in pardoning your transgression, in receiving you graciously and in loving you freely, you will be moved, penitently, reverently, lovingly, humbly to say with Mephibosheth, in the presence of David, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

To God be the glory and praise, even of your repentance. It is his own blessed gift to you. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted* repentance unto life."

CHAPTER X.

MEPHIBOSHETH.

There is a brief Scripture biography which may be introduced here. It will help as an illustration of the truth from life and be of service to you in seeing and accepting the way. It is the story of Mephibosheth as given us in the following portions of Scripture, viz.: 2 Sam. ix; 1 Sam. xx: 11-17; 2 Sam. iv:4; 2 Sam. xvi:1-4; 2 Sam. xix:24-30.

This narrative, though brief, is yet marvelously full of the fundamental elements of the gospel of the kingdom. Your condition as a sinner, with the gracious provision made for your relief, and its effect upon your soul, as you believingly apprehend and realize it,—all this the Holy Spirit has therein wonderfully illustrated. You may regard the biography as setting forth the return of a sinner to God together with the treatment accorded him upon his return.

The first fact to be noted, as stated in 2 Sam. iv:4, and 2 Sam. ix:13, is that he was lame on both his feet as the result of a fall. The crippling

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was total, not partial. You may take this as illustrative of the fact taught throughout the Scriptures, viz.: that the presence and effects of sin have extended to our whole being. In the use of the phrase "total depravity," it is not intended to affirm that all are just as bad as they can be. This certainly is not true, not being borne out either by the facts of experience or the teaching of the Scripture. But nevertheless the phrase is true in the sense that the evil effects of sin are realized throughout the totality of our nature—no part being exempt. Our bodies are certainly affected. And whatever way you may view the immaterial side of our being, whether in the commonly accepted three-fold division of the will together with the intellectual and emotional, or whatever other method you may adopt, it still remains true that sin has so lodged itself in the soul that all of its varying manifestations and activities feel its blighting presence. No department of your being has escaped it. It is total. And the salvation wrought for you must and will be as universal as this your need. Through sin therefore, your crippling is not partial but total,—on both your feet.

Mephibosheth dwelt in a place called Lo-debar the meaning of which is "without pasture." And in such a place are we by nature dwelling.

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Spiritual Lo-debars, sterile, forbidding, destitute of the nutritive elements which should be our portion as those who are of the seed royal.

But from the city of the great king word is sent down to Mephibosheth to leave Lo-debar. David takes the initiative in sending for him. Mephibosheth would never have done this of his own motion. In his poverty-stricken and alienated, Lo-debar condition, he would have remained, so far as he was concerned. And so will every sinner. If a soul ever moves away from it it will be because God graciously takes the initiative and sends for it. If "we love him," is it not "because he first loved us?" In pursuance of this love he sends his messengers of grace to lead you into the fullness of blessing which he delights to minister.

Well, with mingled emotions, Mephibosheth, having received the command and invitation, begins the journey. He is not yet fully assured as to what the outcome may be. But, moved by the spirit of obedience, he will go with fear and trembling, casting himself upon the mercy of the great king. From the salutation of the king when he came into his presence, we conclude that he was fearful as to the kind of reception awaiting him. And such fear he no doubt regarded as well-grounded in view of his position and antecedents as being of the house of Saul, the tra-

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ditional enemy of David. The consciousness of all this troubled him.

And so has it more or less every soul who has heard the voice of God by his messengers calling them from their spiritual Lo-debars. There is a time, brief, or more continued, during which, in view of their aroused sense of sinful alienation and ill desert or conviction of sin they are subject to fear as to the outcome of God's dealing with them. But moved by the spirit of obedience, wrought in them by the Spirit, such souls nevertheless go in fear and trembling, casting themselves upon the divine mercy. And when they come—what then?

Well, what was the greeting which Mephibosheth received from the king when he presented himself? He first spoke his name, kindly you may well believe, the very tone of his voice reassuring the troubled heart. "He calleth his own sheep by name." And when, in a self-deprecating and trembling yet loyal way, Mephibosheth answered, "Behold thy servant!" the king's response came quickly, "Fear not." You may well believe that there now entered into Mephibosheth's soul the glad consciousness of an old fear being supplanted by a present joy, for was he not accepted of the king, was not the light of the king's countenance lifted upon him?

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And this has and will be the uniform experience of every one coming to God in obedience to his gracious call. As you present yourself humbly before him he speaks kindly to your heart. The pulsing tide of a new life is consciously realized as you joyfully hear from his own lips the comforting assurance, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." You look into his face and the light thereof is lifted upon you.

But for the why and wherefore of the consoling word of the king, his gracious look and beneficent conduct toward Mephibosheth, you must look elsewhere. It was not on Mephibosheth's own account simply that the king was so graciously disposed. There was another reason, back of all his sorry plight, which moved and obligated David to so look and speak and act. "Fear not, for I will surely show thee kindness," but why? For thine own sake, Mephibosheth? Not so. "I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan's sake." A much better ground of confidence this than if it were done for his own sake. You remember the covenant mutually entered into by David and Jonathan, in which they pledged each other, because of their love, to do certain things. So long as each remained faithful to each in the fulfillment of these covenant obligations, so long was their solemn

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binding force recognized as present, compelling with the compulsion of love to the practical shewing forth of the kindness upon which they had mutually agreed.

Well, Jonathan proved faithful to the end and passed into the heavens. So that now all possibility of the violation, on his part, of the covenant mutually entered into, is forever removed. Had Jonathan violated it David would have been released. But, in the absence of such violation, the promise, lovingly given, holds. And David gladly recognizes its ever abiding force. "Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan's sake." And if for Jonathan's sake, then the time can now never come when this obligation shall cease. David cannot free himself therefrom and Mephibosheth can plead for and claim kindness at the hands of David with confidence, based on the righteousness of his claim, in view of David's covenant with Jonathan. This would be absent were he coming simply in his own name.

There is herein illustrated for you the blessed ground of the assurance of eternal life which it is your privilege to entertain.

When God says to you, "Fear not," gladdens you with the light of his face and deals kindly with you, were there no other ground of confidence for you as to the continuance of all this

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other than your own immediate personality and its needs—your hope were indeed a broken reed. But it is not so. “Not for your sakes, do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.” Then for whose sake is it? Need I answer? As in the one case for Jonathan’s sake, so now the kindness of God is and will be shewn unto you for Jesus’ sake.

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name,
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.”

Such a hope is “sure and steadfast” for the same reason that Mephibosheth’s was, viz.: the covenant obligations of the great king. The Father and the Son entered in a mutual covenant in the eternal past, according to the Scripture, and in pursuance of its obligations and in order to fulfill the same the Son says, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.”

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The Son so fulfilled what he voluntarily assumed that he could exclaim on the cross, "It is finished." Not one jot or tittle of all that he had covenanted to do failed. What then? Just this—that if he failed not in fulfilling neither will the Father fail in being under obligation to fulfill. The promise of love to you, to shew kindness to you, was made to and in Christ from "before the foundation of the world," and "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." You come then, with a confidence born of the fact that God—be it spoken with reverence—cannot free himself from the obligation to shew kindness to you. It is an obligation voluntarily entered into and continuing for ever because of the finished work of the Son.

In Christ and for his sake you claim this kindness as that to which you are righteously entitled. God honors this plea and is honored by it. "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased," and with you, for that dear Son's sake, will he also be well pleased. He will speak words of cheer, your heart will be made glad before him, and he will unfold to you the plentiful provisions of his grace, the rich inheritance in store and the assurance of his abiding presence.

All this is expressly declared. "I will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father." That, in

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addition, or as a part of the wider range of blessing involved in the varied elements of the King's fellowship and favor.

Richer was Mephibosheth now than if had continued in the undisturbed possession of his father's patrimony. From the poor condition of one whose inheritance had been alienated he rises to that of one unto whom not only the old but vastly more than the old has been restored.

And for you, in Christ, is there likewise to be this enlargement, beyond what you can "ask or think," as compared to the patrimony lost by you through sin. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Into the king's presence he comes and there abides. He goes no more out forever.

"Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

"For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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And what spirit does Mephibosheth shew as the recipient of such favor? He is evidently filled with a profound sense of humility on the one hand and with a corresponding gratitude on the other. Humility because of a vivid apprehension of his own unworthiness and gratitude because of the greatness of the favor. The proportions of the latter tower majestically before his vision, not only absolutely, but all the more because of their relation to and comparison with his sense of his own demerit. And so, looking upon himself and then upon the king's treatment of him, there is such an onrush of genuine humility and grateful recognition that he exclaims: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

Thus has it and will it ever be. Not only will you be characterized by humility before God, in view of your sins, and a grateful acknowledgment of his mercies be forthcoming, but each of these will be enlarged by their mutual influence upon one another and in proportion to the keenness of your apprehension of the truth of things. God may take various ways to open your eyes to see yourself as you are and have been and to behold him and his benefits. And this revelation may vary in degree—more to one than to another. The fountains of your emotions may be stirred more

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or less profoundly because of the vision. Deep humility because of sin will be balanced by a correspondingly exalted gratitude because of gracious favor. Thus, in proportion to the individual apprehension of the truth, will there come to each truly penitent soul—standing in the presence of and listening to the declarations of the divine love—such a stirring of the emotional fountains as will mean, whether uttered or unexpressed, the prostration of self in humility before the great King and the grateful exaltation and crowning of him Lord of all.

CHAPTER XI.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.

To still further reveal and illustrate the way of life and confirm you in the faith thereof, let us briefly study one of the great foundation words of the Bible, viz.: Righteousness. In the examination of this term you will find that its relations and meanings vary. Let our present purpose be to find the righteousness which shall be our salvation.

You meet it, for example, in Ps. 97:2, "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Here it refers to God's absolute and essential righteousness, without which his Deity would cease.

Again Is. 45:19, "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." This is God's relative righteousness—a declaration of the expression in word which he makes of his essential nature.

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Then too, Jer. 9:24, "Let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight saith the Lord."

Here also is a declaration of God's relative righteousness—the expression of his essential nature in action.

Now, with the foregoing we have nothing to do, so far as our present quest is concerned. This belongs to God, as God, but you are seeking one which you can call your own and be for salvation.

In the pursuit of it we find one which comes exclusively within the domain of human character and conduct and at the same time receives the high commendation of God. And that, too, no matter where found. It is commendable whenever and between whomsoever it may be manifested, the world over, irrespective of their manifold religious distinctions. For example: Jer. 22:3, "Thus saith the Lord: execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place." Then too, Dan. 4:27, "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee,

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and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

So also, Lev. 19:15, which might serve as a motto in all our courts, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor."

Here then, is a righteousness, more or less possessed and exhibited by all, too much of which we cannot have, and which receives the high commendation of God.

But now a strange thing occurs. You take it and begin to bank on it or build on it—as there is an inveterate tendency in all men to do—in the belief and hope that through its agency you will enter into life, and you will immediately have to face the condemnation instead of the commendation of God. What he before approved he now repudiates. For example, Matt. 5:20, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Is. 64:6,

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"But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." Very different here is the language of God concerning "our" righteousness from what it was in the antecedent series of quotations. And why? Just because it is now out of place. A new use is attempted to be made of it, which involves on the part of man a monopoly of the glory of salvation. God says, "My glory will I not give to another," and yet that is just what man proposes to arrogate in attempting to transfer his righteousness to a new sphere and to a new use. He would remove the crown from the head of him to whom salvation belongs and place it upon his own.

What a beneficent thing is earth in the gardens and fields. You speak its praises as it nurtures the golden grain and causes the landscape to be adorned with the beauty and fragrance of the flowers. But let that same earth be brought into your parlor and you cannot abide it. It now becomes "dirt" and the worthy mistress of the house has it swept into regions beyond. It is out of place. And so there is such a thing as moral dirt, which God repudiates and sweeps from his presence.

But is there not a righteousness which you may call your own, which will not be thus repudiated and which, at the same time, will become your

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salvation? Let us pursue the inquiry—In Ps. 132:9 it is said, "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy." And in verse 16, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." Here then, in one verse, the clothing of the priesthood is called righteousness and in the other it is called salvation. There seems to be a righteousness then which is identical with salvation. But look again, Is. 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Here, in two clauses of the same verse, the fact is announced that there is a righteousness which is identical with salvation, and that the realization of this on the part of the soul is a source of great gladness.

This being so, the query still remains—what is it? And—where are we to find it? We have seen that the two former righteousnesses, viz.: that of God and man, which we first examined, were not of the nature to answer our purpose or meet our need. This, therefore, must be one with marks distinguishing it from the others as to origin, relation and effect.

In order to determine the matter your attention will have to be given to a phrase which repeat-

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edly meets you in the Epistle to the Romans. For example, in Rom. 1:17, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." The phrase which you must specially note is "righteousness of God." Again, in Rom. 3:21, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." So also, Rom. 10:3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Now, the query is—what does the phrase "righteousness of God" mean? Does it refer to that righteousness of God with which this inquiry began,—that which was his essentially and to which expression was given in word and deed? This cannot be for the very good reason that in these phrases in Romans we have a righteousness which is evidently transferable, while the righteousness with which the inquiry opened was just as evidently not transferable. That this *is* transferable is clearly revealed by the Apostle in Rom. 3:22, when he says, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Here then is a righteousness of God which can be transferred—can pass over from him to men. And, having passed over, it becomes their salvation. But this

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cannot be said of that righteousness which is essentially his. That is not to be transferred to the creature. Otherwise the Creator would cease to be what he is. So also would the creature. They would change places.

Now what righteousness is it that can thus be transferred, and where is it to be found? To answer this, you have but to look again at Rom. 1:17. You may include verse 16 also. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

The word "therein," in verse 17, reveals where this transferable "righteousness of God" is to be found. Find that out and you have arrived at the goal of your quest. Well, what is the antecedent of "therein?" Is it not the "gospel of Christ," in the preceding verse? For "therein," that is, in the "gospel of Christ," is the "righteousness of God" revealed. Now, what righteousness is it that is revealed in the gospel of Christ, which makes it the "power of God unto salvation?" What but the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Divine-human Saviour of men? The relationship he bore to violated law

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—to offended justice—as he was “made under it,” was such that it was vindicated, satisfied, perfectly fulfilled, that all its claims were so fully met by and in him, as our atoning Sacrifice and Mediator, that by him it could be said upon the cross, “it is finished.” The work given him of the Father in our behalf he, by his life and death, accomplished, thereby achieving a righteousness called the “righteousness of God,” which by him may be imputed to us, transferred, laid to our account, and by us received through faith, so that we become the “righteousness of God” in him. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Here then, you have found the “garment of salvation,” the “robe of righteousness,” the reception of which makes the soul “joyful in God.” You are “complete in him.” “This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Before dismissing it let us look at it from one or two other view points. Daniel says regarding it in Chap. 9:24, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” Is it not well for

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even the best of God's saints upon the earth—whose righteousness, steady-going though it be in the main, is yet, to their own knowledge if not that of others, fitful,—is it not well to have a righteousness that is not fitful, yea even that is “everlasting”?

How much does such a priceless boon cost? Cost for you? You know somewhat as to its cost for him. Gethsemane and Calvary tell you. But what do we have to pay for it? Rom. 5:17 answers: “For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” It is then a “gift,” “without money and without price.”

And how received? “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” You just reach forth and take it by your faith. In one sense, therefore, your faith saves you, but not really. You are in danger of death by starvation. Bread is offered you. You reach forth your hand to receive. What is it that saves you—your hand or the bread? You are dying of thirst. Water is brought. You eagerly grasp it. Which is it that saves you—the hand or the water? Your hand is an instrumental cause

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but the real cause is the bread or the water. Jesus offers himself to you in your need as the bread and water of life. You stretch forth your hand, that is, your faith, in eager reception of this living bread and water. You live. But is the glory of your salvation to be attributed, in the last analysis, to your hand, your faith, or to the living bread and water? Surely to the latter. Your faith is an instrumental cause, but the real cause, after all is said and done, is the "bread of life which came down from heaven of which if a man eat he shall live forever." He is the Alpha and the Omega of your salvation. To him be all the glory. Amen.

The results of its reception are most refreshing and blessed. Among them the Apostle mentions the "peaceable fruit of righteousness." "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." There will be peace in the soul, peace between souls, and peace between the soul and God. And when this becomes universal, as it will, for he is to reign "from the river unto the ends of the earth," then under the benign sceptre of the "Prince of Peace" there shall be "nothing to hurt or to destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

And your crowningtime will be by and by when the crown of righteousness will be placed upon

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your brow. "For I am now ready to be offered," said the great Apostle, "and the time of my departure is at hand."

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith :

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

CHAPTER XII.

JUSTIFICATION.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here then the Apostle introduces you to justification. It will be well for you to have an intelligent grasp of this doctrine, having to do, as it does, with your standing before God and the reasons therefor. This will so confirm you in the truth, as to the way of life, that there will be insured to you greater restfulness, comfort, peace, as well as a larger, more grateful and fruitful recognition of Christ as the author and finisher of your faith.

As a matter of fact, it is already settled by your believing acceptance of Christ as your redeemer. Your standing now before God is that of one who has been “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Your heart gives him glory and sings his praise, but if your head reinforces your heart by a larger insight into the ways of God towards you, as revealed in his word, your praise will be richer in

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volume, as your whole being will be called more fully into play. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and *all that is within me*, bless his holy name." All the varied faculties with which God has endowed you are thus to reinforce each other in giving him glory.

As to the importance of the fact of justification before God—this was emphasized in the opening chapter. All history, sacred and profane, attests it. The question of the ages has been, "How shall man be just before God." But being blessedly assured, experimentally, by the faith of Christ, so far as each believer is concerned, there yet remains to be possessed such knowledge of its nature as will confirm your faith, deepen your reverential devotion, enlarge your adoring estimate of his grace, and quicken you to more fully and joyfully "Crown him Lord of all."

In justification you become before God a holy and righteous person not actually but legally or in God's estimation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." You have passed over from death to life, from bondage to liberty, from being an alien to sonship, adopted into God's household of redeemed children through grace. Your state has been changed from being that of a sinner condemned to that of a sinner justified. And in all accusations and con-

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troversies that may arise concerning you, from any or all adverse powers in the universe, God will now stand by you. You have already been adjudged by him as being a free man of Christ—your allegiance transferred from Satan unto God. In law you are now a subject—and a willing one, for he would have no other—of the King eternal, immortal and invisible, as truly as are the saints in glory.

All your sins are laid on Christ so that your standing before God is that of a sinless person. There is no sin on you, but, being in him “not having your own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” then, in relation to the claims of divine justice, as he is “so also are you in this world”—even holy, harmless and undefiled.

But in point of fact you are still sinful and in momentary need of his forgiveness. The Lord's prayer is always in order on this side of heaven. But your actual condition will be gradually approaching your legal standing until finally you will be sinless in fact as in law. That is your goal. For this Christ came into the world, lived, died, rose again and intercedes. All has been done that his people might be saved from their sins, from their presence and power as well as

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guilt, that there might neither be sin in them nor on them. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Now in this justification which you receive from God the pardon of your sin is included, but that is not all there is to it. You might be pardoned without being justified but you cannot be justified without being pardoned.

The pardoning power, for example, is resident in the chief executive of the state. Here is a condemned criminal for whom a pardon is sought. The chief magistrate in the exercise of his sovereignty and clemency, grants it. The criminal is thereby restored to his liberty and rights as a citizen of the state. But is he thereby justified? By no means. His guilt remains. So also his unrighteousness. On the basis of what he is, he is not entitled to be thus treated. Were his case to be acted on by a judge it would not issue thus. No change may have been wrought in the man and the pardon is a sovereign act granted without reference to any claim of the criminal on the basis of justice or righteousness.

But in your justification the case is different. You become the free man of Christ, a member of the household of faith, you have the rights of citizenship in the commonwealth of Israel restored to you, not simply because God in the exercise of

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his sovereign clemency elects to so do, without reference to anything by which you may be entitled thereto. Not at all. If God justifies you and you go forth a free man, enjoying the rights of citizenship, it is because you are entitled to this. To do otherwise would be unjust to you. In his capacity of judge God declares that you are guiltless and that your standing as to righteousness is such that justice would be perverted into injustice were you to remain longer under condemnation. You are made free on the basis of righteousness and without it you could not be. But this does not mean that you, yourself, are actually holy or righteousness in character and that God does as he does because of what you thus are. What it does mean we shall shortly see. But that it does not mean that you are of God declared to be just, and treated accordingly, because of what you *are* or *do*, you may freely and fully gather from the express teaching of his word.

Antecedently to such teaching you might so conclude from what has already been taught as to faith and your own experience of its reality. You are not the author neither yet are you the finisher of your faith. If you were, then the glory of your salvation would be your own. But God declares that his glory will he not give to another. The crown which belongs to another is not to be put

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on your head, either by your own hand or by that of any one else.

And as with your faith, so with your justification and all else which pertains to your salvation from the guilt, power and presence of sin. From beginning to end God alone is to be exalted and glorified. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

That you are not to put any confidence in the flesh, or base any expectations of justification upon its works, or regard them as the ground or reason why God should declare and treat you as justified before him, is evident, for example, from such Scriptures as the following: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And, more especially "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Here evidently, works of all kinds are excluded. If God declares you just before him and treats you accordingly, it is not because of anything meritorious in you moving him thereto. You are

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not thus to have reason for glorifying. "Not of works lest any man should boast." "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Faith and works cannot share it between them. It must go exclusively to the one or to the other. And God gives it to faith. So your works must be put off, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.

So also will this be borne in upon your mind and heart forcefully from what the Scriptures affirm as to the entirely gracious character of your salvation. If it be all of the grace of God, as the Bible asserts, then how can your works, how can what you *are* or *do* righteously claim any share of the glory? God is not going to divide the honors with you. If it be of grace it cannot possibly be of works; and if of works then not possibly of grace, for these terms mutually exclude each other. And so the Apostle says, "If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." And also, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt."

There is absolutely nothing left here on which

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the hope of entering a justified state can be built, so far as your own merit is concerned. The Scripture representation is constantly to the effect that the ground of your acceptance as a justified person before God, is not within you but outside of you. It is on the basis of something which has been done for you instead of anything done by you or accomplished in you.

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The justifying cause here is asserted to be the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus—a cause external to yourself. So also in the same chapter, Rom. v, verses 18 and 19, the fact that the ground of your justification is not within but without you, is affirmed. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." That is, not on the basis of your righteousness, but because of the righteousness of another. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Again, it is not for your obedience that you are accepted as just with God, but because of the obedience of another. That is, as here taught and taught throughout the Scriptures, you must look elsewhere than within

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the circle of your own being and doing for the reason why, before God, you are now regarded as a just person from whom the sentence of condemnation has been righteously removed.

This being so, the query naturally arises—where are we to look? And the only Scriptural answer that can be given, an answer that finds a response in the heart of every sincere Christian believer, is that it is because of the righteousness of Christ. You are “accepted in the beloved.” To you, as a believer, “Christ has become the end of the law for righteousness.” And the justification that comes to you because of the righteousness of your Lord you are not to understand as making you righteous. That is, your character is not so immediately affected thereby that from an unrighteous or unholy person, in fact, you become at once changed into a righteous or holy character. Your character will, of course, be affected by your new relationship to God in Christ. But that will be a progressive affair. You will be gradually changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

But your justification refers, not to a change of character, but to a change of state. Because of the righteousness of Christ you are declared of God free from the condemning sentence of the law. “There is therefore now no condemnation

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to them who are in Christ Jesus." The condemnation was borne by him, and you, being in him by faith, "not having your own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ"—then you also were condemned in and with him and will not be condemned a second time. When he, and you in him, bore the condemnation of God for sin it was "once for all." Neither the atoning sacrifice nor the condemnation will ever be repeated. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

You are then, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, declared of God to be righteously free from condemnation. You have a right to liberty—the liberty of Christ. And to this change of state—not change of character—the Scriptures give the name of justification. To the query, "How shall a man be just with God?" this is the only and all sufficient answer. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Your justification, then, rests not on what you are or do, not on what is within you, but on what

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Christ is and has done, that is, on what is external to you—all of which becomes yours by faith. You are just, because you are “found in him not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but, that which is through the faith of Christ.” “As he is, so are you in this world.” You are free, so far as all legal claim against you, on account of sin, is concerned. The law’s demands are satisfied and you walk the earth as the freeman of Christ, as a son of God, accepted in the beloved.

When you thus appropriate Christ by faith so that the perfection of his obedience and atoning sacrifice becomes yours—his righteousness is said, in the Scripture, to be imputed to you. That is, it is so laid to your account that God deals with you as being sinless, so far as the right of the law to condemn you is concerned. You are treated as if it were actually yours. And it is yours. God makes it yours when you receive Christ by faith. But not in the sense that your inner nature or character is yet fully changed and made conformable in all things to the image of Christ. That change, which is to be wrought in you, will be gradually effected by the word and Spirit of God, as you will be dying unto sin and living unto righteousness.

And, finally, in his immediate presence, your

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inner character, as well as your outward standing before God, shall be sinless—neither sin in you nor on you.

The imputation, then, of the righteousness of your Lord changes your standing before God—your state, but not your character. From being an alien, you become at once a citizen of the commonwealth of Israel and are fully entitled to the privileges thereof. Paul, in Romans, quoting David in reference to this says: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

And in 2 Cor., 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them."

It is then because of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, affirmed by the Scripture to be imputed to you, that your standing before God becomes that of a just or justified person. The glory of your high estate, as one of God's free-men, belongs, not to you but to your Lord.

"To suppose that a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience derogates from the honor of the Mediator, and ascribes that to man's virtue

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which belongs only to the righteousness of Christ. It puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own Saviour, in a respect in which Christ only is the Saviour: and so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature and design of the gospel, which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer."

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name,
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

"When he shall come with trumpet sound,
O, may I then in Him be found;
Drest in his righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

CHAPTER XIII.

WARFARE

The prey has been taken from the mighty and the lawful capture has been delivered. Your standing before God is now that of a righteous person. Christ has become "the end of the law for righteousness" to you as a believer. You are "complete in him" as to your acceptance, your freedom from condemnation, your assurance of full and eternal salvation from all evil in the immediate presence of God. God is now "for you" and "who can be against you" with any well-grounded hope of final success? No one can pluck you out of your Father's hand. "Who shall separate you from the love of Christ?" You may be persuaded "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord."

But the effort will nevertheless be made from sheer enmity to God and holiness as well as to

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you in view of your new relations, tastes, aims and character. You have been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," brought from bondage to liberty, from darkness to light, from allegiance to sin and satan to the obedience of Christ, from being a citizen of one kingdom to citizenship in another. The old order has ceased and you have become a new creature in Christ Jesus. But it still remains true that the actual, full and final realization of all that is involved in your changed estate is not yet. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins."

Although sin, by the grace of your Lord, has been dethroned, its power shaken to the foundation, so that it shall no more "reign unto death," yet it is by no means fully ejected, and is not only capable of doing, but certainly will do much to trouble and perplex you. Wherefore "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." Let your hope and your faith be in God. Amid sin's desperate onslaught you will have frequent occasion to say with the Psalmist: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

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While, on the one hand, with a triumphant faith, you may sing:

Bless God, O my soul, from sin's guilt thou art free,
'Tis gone once for all, it no more shalt thou see,
O blessed salvation! no more need'st thou fear
The voice of the Lord, thy Redeemer, to hear.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, for sin's broken power,
No more shall it reign undisturbed from this hour,
"Thy Redeemer is strong," to him shall it yield,
His sceptered dominion shall now claim the field.

Bless God, O my soul, for the hope he has given,
A hope "sure and steadfast" and anchored in heav'n—
That yet, in his presence, from sin all set free,
Thy King, in his beauty, my soul, thou shalt see.

O blessed salvation! from sin's guilt and power,
O blessed salvation! when cleansed evermore,
Thrice blessed salvation! from sin's guilt, power, stain,
Thine Lord, be the glory, Amen and Amen.

Yet, on the other hand, sin being of the devil, whether within you or without you, will wage such relentless warfare upon you that to you at times no more than to Paul will there be freedom from the oppressed cry, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" You may be so "brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members" as to penitently put forth the agonized supplication:

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Leave me not O God of mercy,
Sorely do I need thee near;
Not in anger but compassion,
Bow Thou unto me Thine ear.

Needy breathings, mid my struggles,
Rise to Thee, or, mute I lie,
Trampled o'er by foes tyrannic,—
Lord have mercy! or I die.

Gracious Lord! to Thee a traitor!
Heeding not to "watch and pray,"
Parleying with the foe, repenting,
When, alas! was lost the day.

Not this once, but times unnumbered,
Have I thus dishonored Thee;
Justly then, Lord, I acknowledge,
Thou might'st now abandon me.

Yet long suffering, slow to anger,
Thou'rt not willing I should die,
Thus believing, I still upward
Unto Thee will lift mine eye.

But with the triumphant faith of Paul, exclaiming amid the fierce conflict, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord," so will you be privileged through faith to conclude your penitent prayer with the victorious strain:

Cease, my foes, then your exulting,
Fallen thus, I yet shall rise,
Christ hath died, through Him I'll conquer,
And yet enter Paradise.

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I need not, of course, enlarge on the fact that for varied reasons, the servants of Christ will experience differences in the degree of intensity with which they will have to wage this warfare. To one, the "good fight of faith" will not nearly be so severe as to another, neither may it be so trying at one time as at another for the same person. The experience of God's children, whether recorded or unwritten, abundantly testifies this. But in some measure the warfare must be waged by all because of sin's presence and activity.

Nevertheless, in the midst of it, "according to your faith" will the "peace of God keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

You may be "hunted like a partridge on the mountains," as David was, but you will escape as he did "from the snare of the fowler" and enter through grace the full fruitions of the Kingdom ordained of God for you. Had you not become a candidate for a "crown of righteousness" you might have remained comparatively undisturbed by the powers of evil, but it would have been the stagnant peace of spiritual death. Better the spirit tossings of warfare with sin because of the life and returning health and strength involved. The following homely illustration pertinently reveals the difference.

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An infidel judge, and his colored servant went duck hunting one day. Sambo was a Christian and sometimes troubled with a varied assortment of Christian conflicts. The judge was not and told Sambo so. He asked the colored man why it was that he and other Christians were thus troubled at times. He thought that he was better off than they. That question floored the colored man for the time being. He was silent. After awhile they came to a covey of ducks and the judge blazed away, killing one and wounding another. The judge called to the colored man, "You jump in Sambo and get that wounded duck before he gets off," but he paid no attention to the dead one. Sambo did so and came back in a brown study. "I hab im now Massa, Ise able to show you how de Christian hab greater conflict den de infidel. Don't you know de moment you wounded dat ar duck, how anxious you was to get im out, and you didn't care for de dead duck, but jes lef im alone. You see dat ar dead duck was a sure thing. Now Ise wounded and I tries to get away from de debbil. It takes trouble to cotch me, but Massa, you are a dead duck, dar is no squabble for you, de debbil hab you shuah!"

Troubled with conflicts, as you may be, you will be brought thereby to a wider outlook, a larger room, a fuller life. So the Psalmist af-

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firms: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

In the natural world you have at times felt the pressure of climatic conditions. You could not breathe freely. You felt as if in a prison from which you would fain break away but could not. Then the horizon darkens, the heavens gather blackness, and soon there is the flashing of lightning, the crashing of thunder and the onward sweep of a great tempest. But the storm-king passes and the gentle radiance of the sun again illumines the world. Myriad pearly drops depend from grass and shrub and tree and glad bird songs are again ascending to God. While breathing the now purified and invigorating air you realize that for the boon of such a regeneration the climatic disturbance was a boon to be welcomed.

And so, while in the life of the spirit you may be called upon to struggle with the elements of death, the very disturbance and storminess thereof, under the guiding hand of God, will be the means of your deliverance. You will be led into the joy of a confirmed faith, and assured hope, a deeper love. The songs of spiritual gladness, as in that of refreshed nature, will arise in your

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heart as tributes to the good and guiding hand of the Father, who, through the darkness and the tossings and perplexities of life, is leading you out into the light and the peace and the glory.

A tired pilgrim you may often be in your journey, perhaps, with burning sands under foot and a scorching sun over head, but you will be cheered and invigorated by the refreshing fountains, the verdure, the kindly shade of many an oasis along the way. The inspired record of the saints of God attests this. And the testimony is not thus limited. It is universal. "Threads are sometimes stretched in windows to make Æolian harps. While the air is calm and still there is no music. But when the wind blows softly a faint murmur of music is heard; and the stronger the wind the louder and sweeter the melody becomes. It is so with many human hearts. "The purest, sweetest, holiest joy I ever witnessed in mortal on earth was in one, who, for fourteen years, had been sitting in her chair, unable to lift hand or foot. All these years her heart had been communing with God and the sorrows that beat upon the chords of her soul struck out songs which might have fallen from an angel's tongue."

See yonder rivulet working its way through the narrow defiles of the mountains. It may be

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hindered and driven backward in portions of its course. But it seeks the ocean. And it ultimately finds it after all its devious wanderings.

And so, Christ being formed in you as the hope of glory, your home is the bosom of God. Thither will you tend and move through all the experiences of the mortal life. In him will your life broaden and deepen in the limitless sweep of the Beyond.

But look a little more in detail at the elements of the warfare and its results. While you are not to wrestle with flesh and blood in the usual acceptance of those terms, and while the weapons of your warfare "are not carnal but spiritual," yet the descriptive settings of it are in terms of the natural life and warfare. This is in harmony with the general usage of the Scriptures. The things that are spiritual are set forth under imagery borrowed from the earthly life, out of gracious accommodation to the weakness of our apprehension regarding the things of the unseen world.

Warfare, of course, implies enemies. In this case they are numerous, mighty, resourceful and persistent. When you read the Psalms all this is vividly and forcibly brought home to you. What a record they are of the assaults of foes and of the varied fortunes of the conflict. You there get, as

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it were, a bird's eye view of the whole field with the movements and issues of the contending forces of light and darkness. "Principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places" are marshalled there. They are sometimes classified as "the world, the flesh and the devil." Here is a great trinity of evil with no disposition to show quarter. They are merciless and relentless in the endeavor to compass the destruction of all spiritual good. And their equipment is marvelous. "The wiles of the devil." "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil." "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."

"For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

"For such are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

"And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

You cannot but realize the danger of the situation when the foe is within the gates of man-soul as well as without. The most distressing, the

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most uncivil of all conflicts is what is called "civil war." And here, right at the fountain head of your life, you have a heart which is described as being "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" which you are requested to "Keep with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life." When right at home, within you, in your own nature, there is a "law in your members warring against the law of your mind and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members," you may well realize that the conflict is desperate, that it is war to the death on both sides. Enemies within playing into the hand of enemies without and both of them, at times, appearing as your friends instead of foes, if peradventure thereby you may be deceived and suffer loss. Bodily appetites and passions marshalled into the service of the devil, as well as all the sinful tendencies of the soul irrespective of bodily relations, the allurements of a world "lying in wickedness" and the hosts of evil of the world invisible under the leadership of the fierce, cruel, deceitful, subtle, wicked and powerful prince of devils—such an array is truly appalling.

In the light of such a dread fact you will not readily conclude that the life of faith unto which you are called is to be a holiday affair. The life of a soldier engaged in an active campaign, in real

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warfare, does not surprise men if it have many hardships. That is expected. The wonder would be were it otherwise. Nor must you expect less of the spiritual warfare. All the language of Scripture regarding it is such that if you do expect immunity therefrom you will be rudely awakened to a great disappointment. A surprise is in store for you.

But better this than to go on sleeping and dreaming of peace when there is no peace. In the conduct of the "good fight of faith" you will be under the necessity of exercising the soldierly qualities needed in the presence of an alert and powerful foe. If you do not, loss and captivity will be experienced. So do not be surprised at any of the hardships of the campaign "as though some strange thing happened to you." "But rejoice, inasmuch as you are a partaker of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Your life in this relation will be somewhat of a paradox. Amid all these apparently untoward conditions, these clashings and grapplings with evil, this field of spiritual carnage, it will still be your blessed privilege to experience the peace of God which will "keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giv-

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eth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." "The Lord will bless his people with peace." "The Lord will speak peace unto his people." Your life will be "hid with Christ in God." The innermost center of your being will be in the "eye of the storm," where all is at rest. So that from this inner sanctuary, this pavilion of God in which he hides you, you will go forth as a strong man to run a race, rejoicing with confidence in the salvation of Him who "teacheth your hands to war and your fingers to fight."

The war is to be waged on offensive as well as defensive lines. You are not simply to hold your own, but you are to make conquests. You are to wrest victory from the dominion of the enemy. You are to go up and possess the land even though the giant sons of Anak are there and you be in your own estimation as a grasshopper before them. You will be able to do this not because of your own sword or bow, but because of the Lord your God, who will fight for you and fill you with the invincible might of his own right arm. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world even your faith." "Ever looking unto Jesus the

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Author and finisher of your faith"—there is the secret of your conquering power.

That you are to "move on the enemies' works" is evident because of Christ's example, whom you are to follow. He came that he "might destroy the works of the devil." To do this he had to be aggressive. He did not come into this world to let satan alone. The let alone policy would suit the prince of darkness very well, but your Lord was not here to indulge him after that fashion. Neither must you. Your own welfare depends on "carrying the war into Africa."

In the synagogue, as mentioned in Mark 1: 23-26, our Lord stood in the presence of a devil possessed soul. They cried out "Let us alone," but the Lord came into the world for the express purpose of not letting the devil alone. So he immediately assailed him. "Come out of him." And with much crying and disturbance he came out. Notwithstanding the throes incident to the ejection the man was the better for it. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins." Being quickened, you stand as a representative of your Lord in the presence of a sin-cursed and devil possessed world, which cries out "Let us alone." But as you are to carry on an offensive warfare in your own soul, so as to

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"bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," likewise, so much as in you lies, are you to do similar service for a "world lying in wickedness." The devil in the world is to feel the ejecting power of your character. And the divine that is in you will not speak to "none effect." Satan has heard the summons and with much noise and disturbance he is leaving and will continue to leave this poor sin-cursed race, and a better life will issue. At times he makes a fearful din in the social life of men, so much so that you might fear that "the earth and all the inhabitants thereof were to be dissolved," were it not for your faith that God is "bearing up the pillars thereof." Spare not for his crying, for his ejection, root and branch, means that there will be "nothing to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain." Christ will then "come to his own and his own will receive him."

The word of God is to have free course and be glorified in every nook and corner of your own being and in every department of the world's life. It was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin—languages representative of the religious, educational and governmental life of mankind—that Jesus was King. Prophetic words. Satan is to be cast out and Jesus is to be enthroned everywhere. But this implies aggressive, offensive

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warfare, as well as defensive—in your own life as well as in the regions beyond.

One of the features of the warfare which will encourage you is the fact that you are contending with a cowardly foe. You may now and again be put to a disadvantage by the “wiles of the devil,” which you will need to watch, but face him squarely and he flees. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” To be on the wrong side and to know it, demoralizes an individual or an army. But to go forth conscious of the righteousness of your cause, or with a firm conviction thereof—this will imbue you with courage and lead to deeds of heroism.

“What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?

Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;

And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,

Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.”

So that, with all their numbers and malignity, the hosts of evil are yet cowardly and will flee before you.

But this holds good only in so far as you are

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imbued with the life of Christ, animated by his Spirit and panoplied with the armor of God. Otherwise you will be shorn of your strength, become weak as other men, the Philistines will be upon you and you will be made to grind in the prison house of your enemies. You must never go unarmed, for a deadly enemy is constantly watching. The time is not yet

"When you shall lay your armor by
And rest with Christ at home."

And in order to have you realize more fully your dependence on Christ, how he is the Author and finisher of your faith, the Alpha and the Omega of your salvation, you have but to examine the armor and see how its various parts find their equivalent in the fullness of your Lord. In Rom. 13:14, the command is given to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and in Eph. 6: 11 to "put on the whole armor of God." Now look at the correspondence between the two. What is the armor? "Your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness;"

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;"

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-with you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

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"And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ;"

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

How does the Lord Jesus answer to this? "Your loins girt about with truth." And Christ says, "I am the truth." "Having on the breastplate of righteousness." And Christ in 1st Cor. : 1-30 is said to "be made unto us righteousness." "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." In Eph. 2:14 Christ is declared to be "our peace." "Taking the shield of faith." And in speaking of Christ the Psalmist says, "Behold O God our shield and look upon the face of thine anointed." "And the helmet of salvation." The aged Simeon says of Christ as he beholds him in the temple, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "And the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." And of Christ it is said, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God." And again in Rev. 19:13, "His name is called The Word of God."

Yet with all this equipment and the cheering assurance that you are not alone, that your great

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Friend will "never leave you nor forsake you," it still remains true that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" here as elsewhere.

"Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."
"And what I say unto you I say unto all,
Watch."

"O watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er,
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore."

By the agency of such exercises, the influence of such heavenly associations and the companionship of Divine Personalities, your spiritual health will be confirmed and the varied hardships of the warfare be met with ever growing vigor.

To be in "good form" for the struggles of the earthly life health of body is one of the essentials. For the maintenance of this attention must be given to the quality of the food eaten, the purity of the air which you are breathing as well as to the taking of appropriate exercise.

Similarly in the spiritual life are you to give heed to those necessary requirements for the enjoyment thereof and for the more comfortable and successful accomplishment of its purposes.

You must have wholesome food and receive your portion according to your daily need. "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be

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sure"—even the "bread of life which came down from heaven" and the "living water which shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Then there must be breathed daily the pure air of the heavenly places. This comes with its health bringing influence, purifying and ennobling earthly relations and fellowships. "Blessed be God that even in this ruined world there are some places pervaded with a sweet and pure Christian atmosphere!—Christian homes and societies and churches filled with the very air of heaven, in which the believer grows rapidly in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord; where the Bible is read and loved; where daily duties are performed as unto the Lord; where devout prayer, in secret and from the family altar, ascends daily unto God; where the Sabbath is a delight; and where "holiness unto the Lord" is written over the doorway to the house! Believers who live in such an atmosphere as this are like the "tree planted by rivers of waters that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

And to the daily reception of the heavenly bread and the inhaling of the pure air wafted from the heavenly places must there be added the

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"exercising unto godliness" without which health of spirit can no more be enjoyed than that of the body without activities appropriate thereto. It is said of the Lord Jesus that He "went about doing good." And the good He did had a reference to the things of this life as well as the life to come—to the bodies as well as to the souls of men. Go thou and do likewise, as love to God and thy neighbor may prompt thee, and thou shalt assuredly grow up into Him, the possessor of a healthy character and life before God and men.

And now in view of all this equipment and activity, what will be the result? Will you or will you not be encouraged by the knowledge that you are not fighting in vain? That the forces of righteousness are gradually gaining control, while those of evil are retiring, with growing evidences of their contending for a "lost cause?"

The Spirit of God has tersely foreshadowed the result in 2 Sam. 3:1, when recording the general issue of the conflict between the house of David and the house of Saul. "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." This is true both as to the triumph of the kingdom of Christ in the whole earth as well as in the whole of each individual believer. It is the will of God, even

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your sanctification. It is one of the fruits of faith for which you are indebted to the gracious presence and work of the Spirit. God working in you both to will and to do you are enabled by faith to work out your salvation in the "putting off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" and in "putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "More and more the principles of evil, still infecting our nature, are removed and their power destroyed, while the principle of spiritual life grows until it controls the thoughts, feelings and acts and brings the soul into conformity to the image of Christ." In this process the soul may be grievously tried at times as is evident from the experience of the Apostle as given in Rom. Chap 7. But ultimately victory is sure through Christ.

Yea Lord,—I know that Thy command
To "watch and pray,"—obeyed,
Would hourly bring victorious joy
O'er foes 'gainst me arrayed.

Yet, knowing this, O sinful heart!
Why wilt thou, hour by hour,
'Gainst light and love be captive led
By passion's luring power?

That which I would,—that do I not,
That I would not,—I do,

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In dumb despair I lie, or moan,
Pierced by Thine arrows through.

How long my heart, how long pursue
This thorny path of sin?
When will such bondage have an end?
When watch and pray and win?

From whence shall sure deliv'rance come?
Whence freedom from this death?
'Tis found! 'tis found! through Christ the Lord!
Thank Him with latest breath.

Thou say'st, "I'll never leave, nor yet
Thee will I e'er forsake,"
For this, O heart of mine, rejoice,
For this, my tongue awake.

O Lord! how great Thy mercies are,
Thy love beyond compare,
To me amid a thousand falls,
Extends thy gracious care.

For this my soul will bless Thy name,
And glory in Thy praise,
For this will crown Thee Saviour King
Unto th' eternal days.

In heaven, after the final victory, your song
will ascend "unto Him who loved you, and washed
you from your sins in his own blood,"

"And made you a king and a priest unto God
and his Father," and to Him will you ascribe the

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"glory and the dominion for ever and ever,
Amen."

To Thee the friend of sinners,
Thou who my Saviour art,
Will I ascribe the glory,
And bind Thee to my heart.

Because of Thy compassion
And love beyond compare,
From heav'n to earth Thou stooped'st
And all my sins didst bear.

My Prophet! Thou hast shewn me
The way, the truth, the life,
And by Thy word and Spirit
Didst end the deadly strife.

My great High Priest, Thou gavest
Thyself a sacrifice
To blot out my transgressions
And fit me for the skies.

Up from the pit Thou brought'st me
And from the miry clay,
Firm on the Rock didst set me,
Establishing my way.

My King! Thou hast subdued me
And my defense Thou art,
Thou never wilt forsake me,
Nor from my side depart.

Thy presence Thou hast promised
Forever to abide,

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"Lo I am with you alway"

What ill can then betide?

From death hast Thou redeemed me,
My Prophet, Priest and King,
From henceforth then forever
Thy matchless grace I'll sing.

Th' Alpha Thou of all my faith,
And Thou th' Omega art,
For this—what shall I render?
"My son, give me thine heart."

Yea Lord! for Thou art worthy,
All glory be to Thee,
My heart would fain adore Thee,
Throughout eternity.

CHAPTER XIV.

VICTORY.

But, however successful the warfare, that is not the condition which you would deliberately choose as your abiding destiny, nor is it intended to be so by your everlasting Friend.

In the spiritual warfare, as in any other, individual victories are helpfully inspiring.

"Each victory will help you
Some other to win."

But individual victories, even, grow monotonous and your soul would tire of them were the necessity laid upon you to continue winning them unceasingly. We recognize the duty of warfare and we are grateful for the grace which has not only called us to engage in it but has also furnished us with all needed equipment and promised continued help in its prosecution. We rejoice in the opportunities thus afforded for glorifying our Lord. Yet it is our privilege not to deem all this as "our destined end or way." While it may be that through much tribulation

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you are to enter the Kingdom of God and while, with Paul, you may "glory in tribulations also," yet you are not called upon to do so for their own sake, but the rather for the sake of the precious something beyond to which they are instrumental in leading you. "We glory in tribulations also"—but why? "Knowing that tribulation worketh"—many desirable qualities. It is not then your duty to regard the warfare unto which you are called and in which you are now engaged, as a condition in which to delight for its own sake, but the rather for the sake of the results to be achieved thereby.

That it is not required of you to rest in battling, as the end to which you are called, even though you were uniformly victorious, which you are not, but that all individual victories are to end in a triumph which will be final—this is the great and sustaining inspiration which is to animate you. The word declares it. The command and example of Christ enforce it. "Be not weary in well doing." And well doing is, of necessity, well fighting. But why not be weary? "For in due season we shall reap." The otherwise flagging energy amid life's burdens is sustained by an inspiring Beyond to which they lead. In "due season" there will be an end of all strivings and you

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will enter into the final and abiding fruitions of all antecedent individual efforts and victories.

This encouraging hope is implied in the command of your Lord, "Occupy till I come."

"O watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er,
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore."

Assuredly this is your purpose and your loyal daily endeavor. But the query will still return, "How long Lord, how long must I battle? Am I to be watching and fighting and praying for ever? Is there to be no end, even to the winning of victories? Will there not come a final victory when the enemy will be forever vanquished and the disturbing presence of evil from thenceforth be a thing eternally unknown?"

And the sufficient answer is "Occupy till I come." Your fighting occupancy of life's battle-field is thus limited. This is encouraging, although variously appreciated amid this life's allurements. With your life tides flowing strongly and the sanguine and generous impulses of your physical and spiritual youth bathing your chivalrous endeavors in the roseate hues of high hopes, you are willing, yea even eager, to "renew it bold-

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ly every day" and that too, indefinitely. And this is well. Well for you and the work. But the query is still legitimate—"how long?" Shall we say a century? After the day's toil people find it needful and pleasant to rest. Will there ever a time come when the thought and fact of rest from the conflicts and wearying toils of the spirit will be welcome? Under the burdens of the present, which may have naught to do with strivings against sin and a seeking for conformity to God, there are yet those who would gladly welcome the grave and would fain be at rest "under the clods of the valley." Many there be who are weary of the present and who at times hasten to be rid of it by self-destruction without an assured hope of a restful Beyond. But you are enabled, amid life's ills, "to do and endure as seeing him who is invisible." Yea even to rejoice amid tribulations through the sustaining grace and high hopes of the gospel. But amid it all, as, daily and continuously, you are finding "a law in your members warring against the law of your mind and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members," will there never a time come when there will be a growing fascination for you in the fact that "there is a rest that remaineth for the people of God?" If you do not so feel at present perhaps at the end of a century you might

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begin to indulge the desire. If not, then say two centuries. Or how long would you wish the battle of life to continue? Interminably? Your Lord has taken your need into merciful consideration and affirms that the conflict is a limited one. You are to occupy only until he comes.

Soldiers have appreciated the limitations of conflict on the battlefields of this world. A general who occupied a very trying position in one of the severest battles of the American Civil War gave public expression to this. He was not a Christian when the battle occurred but fully so at the time of the narration. While the carnage was going on he said he prayed earnestly if ever he prayed in his life. And for what? For the sun to set. He was "occupying" as best he could and determined to continue it, but he did not desire to go on indefinitely.

Wellington at Waterloo was "occupying" with all determination, heroically. But think you did he wish this to continue? Nay, nay, while so doing he was yet looking and longing for the coming of Blucher. And Blucher comes. The last charge is made. The final victory is won. And Europe says to Wellington, "Well done."

But you are to be animated for the occupancy by a two-fold attitude of soul. This will be your inspiration and safeguard.

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You are to fight hopefully because your Lord is coming. Blucher might not have come. Wellington might not have been able to win. The world's "Well Dones" may not be forthcoming. But your Lord will unfailingly come. And by his grace you will hold the field until he does come. "He will come, he will not tarry."

But you are also to watch yourself lest you grow careless because of his absence and be tempted to self-indulgence and a playing into the hands of the enemy. If hope is to cheer you so also is fear to move you. These elements are much appealed to in the Scriptures in the accomplishing of your salvation. There is a tendency in fallen human nature to grow remiss in the absence of an immediately present restraining influence or responsibility. It is operative in the things of this life and is not absent when those of the life to come are at issue. For example, when you go abroad and the old associations and influences of the home life are removed, the new life may not be so exemplary as the old. In school life children, ordinarily models of good behaviour, have availed themselves of the teacher's temporary absence from the room to engage in all manner of pranks. But sometimes the teacher returns at a time unlooked for and then there is a reckoning.

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In the absence of your Lord, so far as his visible, personal presence is concerned, you are to be moved with fear lest his coming should find you not faithfully "occupying." "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

So doing, while you may not be as fortunate as Wellington who "never lost a battle," yet your individual victories will be more numerous and your resultant joy and strength will be greater. When you fall, you can, in the face of the enemy, exultantly shout, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise." You renew the fight under the inspiring belief that your Lord is coming and these individual conflicts shall at length give place to an eternal triumph, when

"You will lay your armor by
And dwell with Christ at home.

But then, also, the example of your Lord, as well as his command, is most encouraging. It is wonderfully human and sympathetic. "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Neither in the case of your Lord nor in yours was or is suffering and conflict to be chosen, en-

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dured, or delighted in for their own sake. "Consider him, then, that endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in your mind." It was refreshingly human and inspiringly sympathetic on the part of our Lord to place himself on record as being able to endure trial because of "joys set before him." He enjoyed suffering no more than you or I, but was willing for our sakes to endure them and was sustained by anticipated joys.

"The thought that by his sufferings he should make satisfaction to the injured justice of God, and give security to his honor and government; make peace between God and man; seal and be the Mediator of the covenant of grace; should open a way of salvation to the chief of sinners, and effectually save all whom *the Father had given him, and himself be the First-born among many brethren.* This was *the joy that was set before Him.*"

Or again, "For the joy set before Him, of his own personal exaltation to the mediatorial throne of the salvation of countless millions of lost sinners from destruction; of bringing them to endless happiness; and of eternally glorifying the whole Name, and all the perfections of God."

While engaged in the conflict, then, it is your privilege to "have respect unto the recompense of

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reward," even as your Lord had, and under that inspiration to do and endure as otherwise might not be.

In this, Jesus was but illustrating the application of "natural law in the spiritual world." If its sustaining power is felt, as it is, in the things of this life why not in relation to those of the life to come?

Here is a student patiently toiling and perseveringly holding himself to it, while denying himself much that would be pleasing and otherwise legitimate, but inconsistent at present with the accomplishment of his work. Why is he willing thus to deny himself and endure? He has "respect unto the recompense of reward."

For the sake of a professional future and the joys thereof he is practicing the self-denials and obtaining the self-victories of the present.

There are miners who endure many privations for years under the inspiration of the hope that a possible future of affluence awaits them. They may have loved ones, in relation to whom, the longed-for joy of being able to minister to them in certain ways, plays among the visions of a future, the power of whose attractions nerves the endeavors of the present.

So with parents, as they endure burdens and practice self-denials and sacrifices for the sake of

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worthy futures for their children and their own consequent parental joys.

Applicable as it thus is to the whole circle of the earth life God projects it also into that of the spiritual and gives you the benefit of the Saviour's own use of it to cheer you amid present warfare by a well-grounded hope of final victory and fullness of joy. With this vital difference, that in the life temporal all your hopes may be blasted, the joys you set before you may never be realized, but, in the spiritual life they are in all things well ordered and sure.

As an inspiring stimulus to fight so as to obtain victories, individual as well as final, the author of the Hebrews appeals to the presence of surrounding witnesses to quicken your best endeavors.

You may view the relation of these witnesses to you either in the light of those who faithfully testified to the truth, even unto death, and, by their *example* would lead you to like steady loyalty, or, as those who are sympathetically interested *spectators* of your conduct. In either case the thought should mightily move to heroic endeavor. The "noble army of martyrs" has left you a legacy of self-sacrificing loyalty to the Lord Jesus, which is wonderfully quickening. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

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Their example has not been in vain. Other victories have been won, other heroes and heroines of the faith have been produced because they so lived and died. And to be a hero or heroine of the faith it is not necessary that you lay down your life on the high places of the field. "The Lord knoweth them that are his" and in the day when he will "make up his jewels" the crown unfading and the "well done" shall not be lacking for those who "feared the Lord and thought upon his name" in the comparative obscurities of the field.

But you are also to feel the quickening influence of those who are lovingly interested as spectators, in your career. This is felt in the various walks of the secular life and it is not ruled out of the spiritual. In the Grecian games, from which the Apostle frequently borrows illustrations of higher truth, those who "strove for the mastery" felt the stimulating presence of the "cloud of witnesses." They ran or wrestled as otherwise they might not.

A young lad goes out from the old home to fight the battle of life elsewhere. The loving hearts of parents, brothers, sisters, friends, follow him. They are watching him sympathetically. Will not the fact of this cloud of witnesses be realized by him as a force in his life impelling him

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to fight and win victories along lines of righteousness?

"A cloud of witnesses around
Hold thee in full survey,
Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way."

And then the solemn, while most cheering thought comes to inspire you, that an invisible host is round about you, interested in your conflicts and triumphs. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." And of the angels it is said: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

And as to the possible relationship of departed saints to the conflicts of the earth life—who knows?

In the middle ages tournaments formed one of the phases of the social life of the people. Champions entered the "lists" or enclosures, to contend with each other, either in sport or in mortal combat. Around the lists was a "great cloud of witnesses." And the contestants were not insensible to their presence, but were led to

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the display of more chivalrous bearing and daring because of their sympathetic onlooking.

But this influence was intensified by the fact that the prize or acknowledgment of victory was to be received from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty. Under the inspiration of those eyes and the anticipated reward from those hands they bore themselves as otherwise they would not.

And to you, as you are "fighting the good fight of faith," having entered the lists against the world, the flesh and the devil," there abides with you the thrilling inspiration to do and to dare nobly, in that, among the great cloud of witnesses you behold one who is the "chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely," even Jesus, the "lover of your soul." He is tenderly watching you and from his pierced hands will come to you the award of victory and his voice will greet you with the "well done."

"Awake my soul stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on,
A heavenly race demands thy zeal
And an immortal crown."

What a joy to feel the old sin life with all its ills forever behind you. To be facing a future of unimagined and unimaginable glories, progres-

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sive and endless, while you are imbued with the youthful and tireless energies of immortality.

The disciples toil in rowing on storm-swept Galilee. "And it was now dark and Jesus was not come to them." But from the mountain side he is watching his own through darkness and tempest. He has not forgotten them. In the hour of their need he comes and, on the farther side, in the calm of the morning, as they tread the Galilean shore, in the fellowship of him who delivered them from all their fears, the memories of the night of sorrow only heighten the joys of the morrow. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." In the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood," with your back forever on the stormy Galilees of the mortal life, as you tread the peaceful, sun-lighted hills of eternity in the company of your Redeemer, with a holier joy, a deeper love and a more reverential adoration, because of sins and sorrows and salvations, will you look up into the face of your Saviour and King and voice the songs of his redeeming grace. You will realize that the sufferings of the present were not worthy to be compared to the heavenly glories.

Old soldiers, meeting in reunion, delight to recount the experiences of the old life militant,—its privations, marches, battles, sieges, with all

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the lights and shadows which go to enhance the valuations of the present. They glory in their old tribulations—their scars, and all the evidences of warfare waged for love of country. And should the “old commander” be present, whom they trusted and loved and who led them through arduous campaigns to many victories, tears of joy would well forth, hearts would throb and voices be raised in glad acclaim.

So will you as a soldier of the cross be filled with a great and pure delight as you gather in the fellowships above and have with you the great Captain under whose banner you fought and by whose wisdom, power and love you were led to victories which issued in the “glory, honor, immortality” unfading and abiding.

When you will “come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,”

“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant” what a “flow of soul and feast of reason” will you enjoy in the banqueting house of the great King, among such a goodly company of congenial spirits. The banner of the old Com-

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mander and Friend will wave over you—even the banner of love.

A patient who is convalescing finds it to be delightfully comfortable merely to be freed from the old pains of his sickness. He revels in the mere quiescence or absence of physical ill, without regard to the on-coming joys which the abounding tides of life will bring with them when they again flow.

So after the ills and conflicts of the earth life heaven will be delightful because of their mere absence. And in fact this is the phase of heaven's desirability which at first mainly attracts us because of the present pressure of evil. To be freed from every element which causes trouble as well as from all their effects, to have them taken out of the life, root and branch,—that is it which at first, and appropriately enough, captivates the soul's desire and fills the imagination as being the very acme of delight.

Because of the absorbing presence and pressure of these things in this life, the Scriptures make large, if not chief, reference to them for consolation amid trial and for the quickening of hope as well as for the confirmation of loyal endeavor. Heaven is held up before the vision and the hope as the place where all the dark brood of earthly ills shall be forever debarred entrance. "Earth

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has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

But the cessation of pain, delightfully restful though the sensation may be, after the feverish tossings of the antecedent illness, does not of itself constitute the chief joy of the physical life. In view of its immediate relation to freshly remembered experiences, and as the first answer to an urgent need, it may overshadow for the present all the other splendid possibilities of the renewed physical energies. But this will not, in the nature of things, continue. In the activities of the renewed life and in the various conquests of its aggressive movements, in the mere fact of giving expression to its abounding vitality,—in all this there will be a greater fullness of joy than in the mere sensation of painlessness after pain. That is to say, there is more gladness in natural, unforced activity, in giving expression to the energies with which God has endowed us, than in a quiescence however restful, which indicates a relationship to antecedent disease. One is the full

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sphere of health, the other is but a hemisphere dependent on another hemisphere of disease for its existence. The gambols of the young animals and the merry voices and romping sports of innocent childhood and youth are more pleasurable and indicative of a God-ordained physical state than freedom from pain after disease, however momentarily exquisite the sensation. The one faces backward in relation to sin and death, the other forward to wholeness (holiness) and life. And so while "after life's fitful fever" one may rest well and that will be a heavenly condition, yet it is not the soul's ultimate and exclusive "destined end or way." There is something higher and better in store for it than that.

In the larger and abounding life of the future, amid the ever unfolding glories of eternity, the joys which will be forevermore filling it with ecstatic delight will not be because of quiescence after pain but because of the unceasing activities indicative and expressive of the health of immortality.

The prisoner to whom the prison doors have been thrown open may shout with joy over his new found liberty. But related as this sensation of freedom is to antecedent bondage, its joy, however keen, will not be so satisfying or durable as

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that which will arise from the uses to which the fact of freedom is applied.

And so while in heaven you will rejoice with a joy unspeakable that the old is passed away forever, it will still be that your highest, best, most satisfying and durable joy will arise—not simply from the fact that the old is gone, but because of what the new will bring. And what that is to be, eternity alone will unfold. There are Scripture declarations regarding it which are entrancing to the vision and the hope, even by their concealings.

The life on high is not rounded out in its glory and blessedness by the mere fact that it will be one where sin and sorrow shall not exist. Such things shall not be, but the question remains: "What will be?" And in the things that will be—there lie heaven's highest glories and joys. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Standing in the presence of the little that is revealed of heaven's possibilities and our meager apprehension of the same, we are like Newton, who said of himself, when considering the relation of his discoveries to the realm of the undiscovered "I do not know what I may appear; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on

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the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

And in harmony therewith the words of another: "When one who has never sailed out upon the ocean stands on its shore and watches its trembling waves as they surge and break upon the sands, how little does he know of the majesty and grandeur of the great deep, of its storms, of its power, of its secrets, of its unfathomable chambers, of its unweighed treasures. He sees only the little silver edge that breaks at his feet.

"So we stand where the Spirit of God breaks upon the shore of our world. We see its silver edge. We feel the splash of its waves upon our hearts. But of its infinite reaches and outgoings beyond our shores we know almost nothing. Yet blessed are they who even stand by the shore and lave their hearts in even the shallowest eddies of this divine ocean."

An eternity of growth up into God in all the knowledge of which our redeemed souls will be capable, as he will be eternally revealing himself, his works and ways to us, our cups overflowing with blessedness and joy unspeakable—to such an estate will your final victory bring you. Surely in the light and life and love of the heavenly

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places you will be "lost in wonder, love and praise."

"O mother dear Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?
O happy harbor of God's saints,
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no terror can be found,
Nor grief nor care, nor toil."

Unto the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," be "the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory," for ever and ever. Amen.

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